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THE

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FROM LIVING MINISTERS OF THE UNITED STATES.

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SERMON CCCCXC.

A NEW YEAR'S SERMON FOR 1849.

BY REV. J. FEW SMITH,

Professor in Auburn Theological Seminary.

HOW OLD ART THOU?

"*And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, how old art thou?*"—Gen., 47: 8.

Another year has passed away! Its days, its hours have been all swallowed in the vast abyss of the infinite Past. Its transactions belong now to the province of history. Memory may recall them, and by her magic power cause their pictured resemblances to rise before us; but never again can they be living events: just as the portrait of a beloved friend may make that friend vividly present to the eye of the mind, while the sweet voice is silent, and the beauty of form and the grace of motion have been hidden in the tomb. We have a power over the Past which we have not over the Future, and the Past sways us as the Future cannot sway. We may, *in fancy*, live over again our past existence; while the utmost stretch of fancy cannot reach into the secret lurking-places of "coming events." We have the faculty of memory by which we may recall; but no faculty with which man is endowed will, of himself, enable him to *foresee*. The Past has a strong hold upon us. It is acquainted with our ways, with all our secret thoughts. It holds the record of our doings, good or bad. It can touch the springs of conscience, and kindle the fires of remorse. It is fraught with a testimony that affects our character and peace. The Future can affect us only when faith enlightens our vision, and when in its light, the voice of the Past speaks cheeringly, or with bitter reproach and condemnation. The Past can teach us. In order to be instructed by the Future we need the light of revelation. The Past, though gone from us, is, in a certain sense, ours. We have lived in it; our lives have taken a coloring from it; in it we have exerted an influence on the world; our weal or woe is linked with it. But the Future is not ours; it is altogether beyond our reach. Yet in that future we must live. That too in its turn must become our Past. And so we go on,—on, for

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ever; each moment casting behind us a portion of time, yet having still before us an infinite future; each moment diminishing that portion of time which is bounded by the grave, and has been allotted by an all-wise Creator as a period of preparation for that existence which is beyond the grave, and has no limit.

And now another grand division of time has disappeared; not a moment, merely; not a day, but a whole Year—a large portion of our little period of probation. Not one Sabbath only; but fifty-two of those sacred days have passed away, with all their holy influences and precious privileges. And we stand at the commencement of a new year; we enter to-day upon a new cycle of Sabbaths. We penetrate still farther into the future. Our earthly journey is not yet finished. A new stage is reached. With seemingly accelerated speed we press on to its termination.

Do no reflections, peculiar to such a period, press upon our minds? Does not the rolling year speak to us? Is it not fitting that we should now give heed to the voice of the past year, and learn what preparation we have made, for the toils and temptations, the joys and griefs, the posterity and the adversity, aye, and the struggle with death which may await us in this new year upon which we have just entered?

That year has gone—gone with its sighs and tears, its pleasures and delights, its deeds of wickedness and of folly, its acts of benevolence and love, its prayers and praises, and lowly confessions, and sacrifices of broken and contrite hearts. We look back upon it and what do we behold? Shall I pause to speak of the shaking and overturning of thrones and dominions, of the exile of monarchs, of the births and deaths of princes, of the triumphs of liberty, of national prosperity and renown, or national adversity and disgrace? Do our hearts shudder, or do they swell, and the blood grow warm in our veins, at sight of deeds of cruelty and oppression, of diplomatic fraud, of wholesale butchery, of the down-treading of the poor by a cold-hearted aristocracy or a gain-loving caste, and of the outbreaking of riotous passions, and the disregard of law? Do we weep as we behold the fires of bigotry, of sectarianism, and of persecution? Or do we rejoice as our vision is greeted by the banner of the cross waving on the hill-tops of Syria, and the plains of India, and our ear catches the song of thanksgiving and praise that rises from the Isles of the ocean? Do we count with joy the converts who flee to the ark of safety? Or do we mourn as the desolations of Zion force themselves upon our view?

The past year, my brethren, is full of such sights and sounds. It has circled the earth, and on the tablet which represents its journey, are mingled all these strokes of light and

shade. It is a picture whose study may well awaken saddened emotions, while yet joy attempers grief.

But why study thus the WORLD'S past year? We have enough for meditation if we bound our vision by our own circle. Brethren, think of these things. What blessings have you received at God's hand? Count up your fireside comforts and joys. Remember your deliverances from danger, your days of health, your comfort in sickness, your prosperity in business. Remember your spiritual joys—God's presence with you at the house of prayer, the refreshing of your soul in the place of social worship, the consolation and strength which he has vouchsafed unto you. Remember your errors, and deficiencies, and offences—your yielding to temptation, and then again your successful resistance of it. Those of you who are yet impenitent, can recall the many opportunities that have been granted you, for securing your salvation: the words of divine truth addressed to you, the warnings of God's providence, the strivings of the Holy Spirit, the anxiety which has been awakened in your souls, your convictions of guilt and danger, and the serious impressions which you have found it so difficult to throw off. And what trials have we had—what sickness—what experience of affliction? How many graves have we seen opened, and whom have we laid therein? Death has been around us and among us in the past year. The old, and the young, and the middle-aged, has he claimed as his victims. Scarcely an individual who hears me has escaped the sundering of some link of connection, either close or distant, by the hand of death, since the last year commenced its progress. Hardly any present have failed to witness funeral rites during that progress. All can remember eyes which twelve months since looked upon them, and which are now sealed in the tomb; voices which then greeted them, which shall be heard no more until the resurrection. And we are yet alive! some with tottering limbs and whitened locks, some just turning to old age, some in the full vigor of existence, some in the rosy morning of life. We are yet alive! and around about us are the mercies of our God. We are yet alive! and we walk among the graves of our fathers and our friends, and we gaze on the fresh turf and the newly-carved monument, or at the sunken grave, and the time-marked stone, the living in the city of the dead. We are yet alive! and to-day are gathered in the house of God, to hear the voice of warning, to drink in the hallowed influence of prayer and praise, to fill our lamps with oil, and trim them for the bridegroom's coming. We are yet alive! and the voice of the past speaks to us its lessons of wisdom, stirring the fountains of gratitude, moving the throb of contrition, awakening hope or fear. We are yet alive! But ah! my hearers, when this year too has fled, and another cycle commences, how many of our forms will have disappeared—how many new

graves will be counted? Who of us will be missed from the solemn assembly that shall then be gathered here? Shall it be the old man who has already reached his threescore-and-ten —or the aged mother—or the blooming youth—or the sportive child? Or shall he who now addresses you be then among the dead? We are yet alive! But the dead of this rolling year —who shall they be?

I have said, we are constantly going onward. And it is well to have some marks by which to estimate our progress. And the great Creator of the world was not unmindful of his creatures' wants in this respect, when he said (Gen. 1: 14), "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven, to divide the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years." He hath established such waymarks on the face of his creation; and these, though silent, speak to our hearts. Each year comes and goes with an appeal to us. As the earth finishes its annual circuit around the sun, and then starts anew upon its course, a voice whispers to us of flight of time, and of that limitless ocean upon whose shores we shall soon stand. And as year after year is added to the past, we count up the number that have fled, and reckon our age, and speculate about the number that yet shall come. "How old art thou?" asks the fleeting year; and unwilling though we be, we are forced to give an answer.

"How old art thou?" In our text, these words form the inquiry of a proud and powerful monarch, addressed to an aged man. Jacob had come to Egypt to live and die with his long lost, but lately found, and dearly loved Joseph. "And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou? And Jacob said unto Pharaoh: The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers, in the days of their pilgrimage." His days had indeed been few when compared with those of his ancestors, whose existence extended through several centuries. And sorrowful had been his pilgrimage; for his domestic peace had been often invaded, and his dearest objects had been snatched from him. The duration of human life, as we thus perceive, had already, even in Jacob's time, greatly diminished; and since that time it has become still less. And though the Psalmist, in his day, spoke of seventy years as man's allotted period, and though occasionally some outlive that period, yet few, comparatively, at present attain unto it, and a little more than thirty years sweeps away a generation of our race. Death has "all seasons" for his own; from earliest infancy to extreme old age, he is constantly bearing off his victims; and it is the utterance of humanity, "few are the days of our pilgrimage."

Now there is occasion for serious reflection in the fact, that the average duration of human existence is so short. Great numbers never reach its limit. The numbers of those who pass by the limit must be diminishing as they recede from it. After reaching a certain distance from it the probability of a further continuance becomes slight. So that, independently of the consideration of the uncertainty of life, of our liability to death at any moment, the shortness of human existence, even upon the most favorable calculation, gives great force, and pertinence, and solemnity to the inquiry, "How old art thou?" There is cause for solicitude as we ask, how large a proportion of our allotted period of existence has passed away, how much yet remains. Each year gone, has advanced us so much nearer to the end of our pilgrimage; and whether viewed simply with reference to this life, or more philosophically and religiously, with reference to the future, it is a matter of no small concern to behold the space upon which we may reasonably calculate, so sensibly and rapidly diminishing. And especially, when the light of the gospel shines upon us, and causes us to regard our earthly existence as a period of probation, of preparation for an ever-during, unalterable state of being; when we are assured that all which can be done to secure eternal happiness must be done on this side of the grave—that Repentance is an inhabitant of earth, and Faith has here her appointed sphere of action—that unless we be reconciled to God by faith in Jesus Christ, before we leave this world, we must for ever remain at enmity with him, and, consequently, be for ever miserable: when we thus regard life, we may well take note of our fleeting years, and be warned by the voice of Time, as he hurries past us. Time performs to us a kind office in propounding the inquiry, "How old art thou?" Subtract the past from the whole allotted period, putting each at the most favorable point—compare the past with the probable future, and have we any leisure for loitering? Is not each moment too precious to be wasted? Thirty, twenty, ten years, seem long to us, when in the outset of life we look forward to them; but how quickly do they pass? The old tells us that time seems not to them as in the days of their youth. Jacob at the end of a hundred and thirty years, regarded his days as "few." The school-boy counts the weeks that must intervene before his enjoyment of a release from study, and they seem to him almost interminably long. The aged pilgrim, nearly done with the cares of life, looks back upon his pilgrimage, and it appears to him as but yesterday that he was the school-boy, chiding the slowly-moving wheels of time.

How old then art thou, my hearer? Count thy years; and be they few or many, in childhood, youth, maturity, old age,—remember that the end is not far off. Each period of life has

its appropriate joys, and duties, and dangers, and cares. But there is one danger, and one duty, from which no period is exempt: it is the danger of death; it is the duty of preparation to meet God.

But the literal numbering of our days is not the only, nor perhaps the most profitable, mode of estimating our age. As "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth," so it may be said, that a man's age consisteth not simply in the number of years which have rolled over his head. Years, it is true, give experience, and furrow the brow with wrinkles, and make men old in days. But some men become far richer in experience at middle life, than others do at threescore-and-ten; some live more in a single year than do others in a score of years. An hour of some men's lives is worth more than the whole existence of other men. Nay, in our own existence, we find that some single hours do more for us, more to give us experience, wisdom, power, more to put the stamp of age upon our forehead, and its feeling in our heart, than whole years have done.

> "There are swift hours in life, strong rushing hours,
> That do the work of tempests in their might!"

They uproot long-standing opinions. They open new mines of thought. They tear aside the veil which has been obscuring our vision, and disclose to us great truths. They awaken slumbering fires within the soul,—fires of passion, it may be, which rage with volcanic fury, and scathe all that is around them, and mark with ineffaceable traces the flowing of their fierce lava. They may be "strong" for good or evil. They may do their tempest-work for weal or woe. On their swift wings they may waft the soul onward in a heavenly flight; or with rushing fierceness they may bear it deep down towards hell. Come for a moment into the sphere of such an hour, and let us watch the workings of the storm. A widowed mother sits by her sinking fire and dimly glimmering light, anxiously awaiting the return of her only son. Young, of generous heart, of cultivated intellect, of powerful talents, fitted to command respect, elicit esteem, and gain renown, he sits in a lighted saloon, chained by the fascinations of the gaming-table. Sum after sum of his little fortune is staked and lost, and glass after glass of the fiery liquid is quaffed, to drown the voice which upbraids him. He has played before, and ceased when he chose. He has, at other times, drunk the intoxicating drink, and yet had power to govern himself. But now is his hour of darkness. A mighty tempest is rising within him. He is goaded to desperation. He can no longer free himself from the charmer. He beholds himself ruined. His brain is on fire. In in his fury he rushes on his antagonist; but is himself felled to the floor, and lies weltering in his blood. Insensible and bloody he is carried home to his mother. What an hour for

her! But the hour is not yet passed. His sufferings have not sobered him. He awakes from his stupor only to more fearful wildness; and while his weeping parent, heart-broken, seeks to relieve and heal him, he in his frenzy lifts his hand against her, and curses, aye, curses her who bore him! The storm has passed; the swift hour has done its work. Would you see its effects? Yon aged woman, bowed with sorrow, and gathering a miserable subsistence from charity; yon bloated form, a young man prematurely old, outcast and reckless, the companion of worse than brutes; these are its effects. That tempest-hour has cast down hopes and happiness; has driven an iron into the widow's soul, has buried bright talents; has made a man a brute; has made an immortal spirit the prey of stinging furies; has fastened on that young man's heart a gnawing, never-dying worm.

Look again: and you see a mother anxiously watching over a sick child. That child apparently is dying. The physician is hopeless. A man of God comes, and kneels with that mother by the infant's cradle; and earnest is the prayer that goes up to heaven that the child's life may be spared, while from the anguished heart bursts forth, "Thy will be done." That petition is heard—sweetly sleeps the babe, as if lulled by the voice of prayer, or soothed by an angel's whisper. The hour passes away. The crisis is over. The child recovers. Oh, how much was wrapped up in that hour! But look again. That child becomes a young man, and alas! a mother's hopes and prayers have been disappointed. He is without God, irreligious, reckless. Better, seems it, that he had died in his cradle and gone up to heaven. But another hour arrives. He has been listening to the truth, and the arrows of the Almighty have stuck fast in his soul. He cannot tear them from him. Bitter, bitter is his struggle; now all enmity against God and determined to resist, and then trembling with fear as if in the very jaws of hell; now moved by the thought of a crucified Saviour, and then anxious lest the blessings of salvation should be placed beyond his reach; now ready to trust in God's mercy, and then fearing lest there be no mercy for him. A tempest is sweeping over him, and he is hurled to the ground. At length all is still. Passion subsides, resistance is at an end. He submits to God. Sweet peace takes possession of his soul. He is once more saved. And he now consecrates himself unto Him who has redeemed him with his own precious blood; and as a preacher of "the unsearchable riches of Christ," he gives his talents, and his richly-furnished mind, and glowing eloquence, to the the holy work of winning souls to Jesus. That hour! how important its results!

These may serve as illustrations of the truth of which I speak. The future will be full of the record of such hours; they are numerous in the record of the past—hours whose im-

press on the earth shall last till the earth is destroyed; hours whose effects shall be felt for ever by souls over which they have passed. These are hours which make men "old" quickly, because the events of a life-time seem to be crowded into them.

The most proper mode of measuring time is by events. He may be said to live the longest, whose life is fullest of events. I do not mean simply of stirring, wonderful, or romantic events, but of true actions, as contrasted with indolence; of things done, thoughts generated and uttered, influence created and used;—not simply of tempest-hours, uprooting and shaking, but of growing hours, each of which produces fruit. Here we may apply, though with a signification different from the meaning of the author, that line of the poet, "It is not all of life to live." Bonaparte's life, though its years were few, was one of centuries. So in a far nobler sphere was Luther's. Henry Martyn lived but a few years after he entered on his missionary life; yet he died older by far than hundreds who long survived him in inglorious ease. We often mourn and wonder, when men are cut down in the vigor of their days, and apparently in the height of usefulness; but we forget to estimate how long they have lived. The Book of Wisdom tells us,* and we ought to remember it, that "honorable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that is measured by number of years. But wisdom is the gray hair unto men, and and an unspotted life is old age."

The great end of life is the love and service of God; and he lives most who most fully attains this end. In the pursuit of holiness consists true wisdom; and this is "the gray hair unto man," he may be said to be the oldest who is the wisest of our race. That man has lived to but little purpose, who has not yet commenced this pursuit—to but little good purpose, I mean, for himself; for God may overrule his living for great good to others, and his life may be crowded full of powerful influences. But viewed in the light of the gospel, yet apart from the view of God bringing good out of evil, he may be said to have lived to but little purpose who has not yet commenced the pursuit of holiness, in the revealed way, And the pursuit of holiness comprises a two-fold object: our own growth in grace, and the good of our fellow-men. So our life is to be estimated by what we have done, or left undone in respect to this two-fold object. Two individuals may start together in the same vehicle, to reach the same point of destination. One is listless, inactive, doses while he is borne swiftly along on his journey. The other is wakeful, full of activity, observes each point along the route, converses with his fellow-travelers and the inhabitants of the country through which he passes, diffuses information, relieves doubt, and contributes to the general happiness. Now we have no hesitation in decid-

* Apocrypha—Wisdom of Solomon, 4: 8, 9.

ing as to the relative claims of these two individuals to our admiration; and if their journey be the journey of life, and they reach the grave together, is it not easy to say which has lived the longer? There are other way marks along this journey, besides the revolving of the earth, the signs in the heavens. There are voices to tell us of our age besides the salutation of passing years; there are seeds of benevolence, of charity, of love to God; there are tears and hand-pressings of gratitude; there are triumphs over sin, successful resisting of temptation, patient endurance of affliction; these are the tokens of God's favor, the smiles of his reconciled and approving countenance; by these our age is to be reckoned. There is the growth of the mind, the expansion of the heart, the progressive sanctification of its affections; these are lines of estimate to mark our progress. And more of such marks may be counted on the past journey of many a young disciple of Jesus, than can be discovered by searching along the lengthened route of others who are gray with years.

I have already guarded you against the thought, that this rule will apply only to the age of the righteous. The wicked may be old without a gray hair. Oh, how fast do they live whose days are filled with deeds and words of wickedness! Along the course of their lives how many black and dismal way-marks may be counted! What maturity of iniquity have we seen among the young! Many a name is on the page of history, into whose short span of time there are crowded whole years of common wickedness; notorious for crime, they have wrought, in their quick passage through the world, what would have sufficed to fill hundreds of ordinary lives. It is sad to think how many "grow old in sin," long ere time has marked their brows with wrinkles, or a single lock is gray!

And now, my hearers, desultory as these remarks may appear, I trust that you perceive that they are not without a connection and a bearing, and that you are ready to accompany me in their application. The occasion is a fitting one on which to address you, individually, the question, How old art thou? Let us together give heed to the inquiry, and on the principle we have just considered, let us reckon our age. Have we filled up the year just ended with action? or have we passed through it listlessly and indifferently? What have we done for ourselves, for our fellow-men, for God? Are there any way-marks greeting our vision as we look back? Or is all a blank? And if there are way marks, are they bright and cheering to look upon? Or does the sight of them fill us with shame and sorrow? Have we been living merely earthly lives?—lives of the body, while the soul has slumbered? How is it with you, my hearers? Have you sought the honor of God? Have you prayed, and watched, and labored, to gain greater degrees of holiness? Have you been charitable? Have you given

freely of what God has bestowed upon you? Or have you been worldly, and cold-hearted and selfish? Have you continued in sin, neglectful of God and holy things, and sought only your sensual enjoyment in the things which earth produces? How have the blessings which you have received, how have the trials which you have endured, affected you? What use have you made of them? Have you grown old in wisdom, or are you yet in your infancy? Say, my Christian hearer, How old art thou? How much has the past year added to thy age? Count not now simply the days of thy pilgrimage. Reckon thy age by thy growth in grace, by thy deeds of holy living, by the good influence thou art exerting on the world; and then say how old thou art.

And here, at the beginning of a new year, let us resolve that whatever be the number of our days, we will not die young; we will fill up our days, our hours, our moments; we will make our hours swift, and cause them to do full work as they rush along. Let us fix our eye upon the great object before us, and bend all our energies to attain it. Time flies. We have a work to do. The night approacheth. Whatsoever is done must be done quickly. For us "to live is Christ." Oh what a glorious life. Have we been living it? Will we live it? Ah! memory bids us weep. Hope bids us rejoice. How far have we come short of our high object! Yet to what a glorious elevation may we attain! Redeemed people of Christ, go on in your pilgrimage, steadfast and rejoicing. Let each year that is added to the past, be full fraught with scenes on which memory will love to dwell. We are drawing near to death. We may not live to see this year's close, or we may live on to feeble old age. But remember,

"Though pale grow thy cheeks, and thy hair turns gray,
Time cannot steal the soul's youth away."

Our bodies shall fail us. Our work on earth must have an end. If we have lived in communion with Christ; if we have lived as becometh the children of God; we shall be old enough, we shall have lived long enough, whenever our summons comes. Our bodies then may die, their service will have ceased. But our souls shall live on in immortal youth.

"The soul of origin divine,
God's glorious image, freed from clay,
In heaven's eternal sphere shall shine,
A star of day.

"The sun is but a spark of fire,
A transient meteor in the sky;
The soul, immortal as its sire,
Shall never die."

And do you too, my dear hearers, who are not yet the children of God, remember that your souls shall never die. Oh will you not ask yourselves how old you are? Another year has gone from you. You have let it pass unimproved. It has added

to your guilt. God has mercifully spared you. Will you still be insensible to his goodness? Will you still withhold your affections from Him? Will you still procrastinate the work of repentance, and the seeking of your soul's salvation? Think of it, my dear friends—*an immortality of wretchedness!* Can you endure the idea? Can you, unmoved, think of encountering the reality? I pray you let the subject of our present meditations have its due weight with you. When the next new year comes, your spirits may be in the world beyond the grave. Are you now ready to depart thither? *No!* Sorrowful is the answer, NO. When will you be ready? Do you know at what hour *death* will approach you? Why then, why under such fearful hazard, any longer procrastinate your preparation? Why waste your precious time? Why not live wisely now, in order that you may live happily hereafter?

"Will the shade go back on thy dial plate?
Will thy sun stand still on its way?
Both hasten on; and thy spirit's fate
Rests on the point of life's little date;
Then live while 'tis called to-day.

"Life's waning hours, like the Sybil's page,
As they lessen, in value rise;
Oh rouse thee, and live! nor deem that man's age
Stands in the length of his pilgrimage.
But in days that are truly wise."

SERMON CCCCXCI

BY REV. SEWALL S. CUTTING,

Editor of the New York Recorder, New York.

THE INEFFICIENCY OF THE CHURCH, AND THE REMEDY.*

"For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof, as a lamp that burneth."—Isa., 62 : 1.

WE have assembled, my brethren, after an established and goodly custom, to dedicate this edifice to the worship and service of Almighty God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. How, so far as the service devolves on me, shall this best be done?

Neither myself nor my brethren in the ministry, can by any outward rites attach a special sacredness to the materials of this edifice, or impart a spell to the atmosphere which it encloses. This edifice will find its best, its only consecration, in subserving the purposes of Christianity. It will be a *sacred* edifice, *if* the incense of spiritual worship ascends from the hearts of Christian disciples here assembling; *if* the gospel is here preached in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; *if* here are witnessed the holiness and zeal of a true and energetic

* A Discourse, delivered at the Dedication of the new Baptist Church in Southbridge, Mass., October 25, 1848.

piety. I think, therefore, that I shall best perform my part in the present service by offering some thoughts of a practical character, having reference to the prevailing inefficiency of the means employed for promoting the cause of religion, and to the remedy by which that inefficiency may be removed.

That the means at present employed for promoting the cause of Christ are inefficient, to a painful extent, will not be doubted. In whatever direction you may look for the proper fruits of Christian exertion—whether in the devotion and consistency of individual professors; in the number of those who are brought from darkness to light and made heirs of immortality, in particular congregations; in the influence of the church of Christ on social and political life and manners; or in the subjugation of the heathen to the sway of the Redeemer;—you cannot fail to see, in the meagreness of the results, the too certain indications of a lack in the kind or the measure of the labor which has produced them. The heart that loves the cause of Christ, and desires the salvation of the world, is pained by the sad spectacle, and often inquires for the remedy. I doubt not there are many here present, to-day, who have made the inquiry, and such, I equally believe, will be gratified with even an humble attempt to solve it.

For this purpose, the text which I have chosen is appropriate. The rapt language of the prophet, indicates a heart set upon the prosperity and glory of Zion, and determined to apply the energies of life to the accomplishment of these aims. We shall see in the end that the spirit of this passage, lodged in the hearts of the people of God, and working out its fruits in the kind and measure of their labors, would effectually counteract the present apathy with which the church is afflicted, and clothe her with new and even primitive power.

For the plainer insight into the real occasion of the present inefficiency of the means which are used to promote the cause of Christ, let us institute a survey of our Zion, so far at least as relates to the matters which bear upon our present theme.

1. And here I may remark, in the first place, that the occasion of this inefficiency is not to be found in doctrinal unsoundness. I think it may justly be feared that the doctrines of grace—the sterner features, as they are sometimes called, of the Theology of the Reformation—are not set forth and enforced, either in the pulpit or in private religious teaching, with the vigor of statement and clearness of elucidation which have marked an earlier period; but it may safely be affirmed that there is no abandonment of these doctrines, and that even the suggestion of abandonment would be rebuked with earnest remonstrances. The doctrines of man's depravity and helplessness, of the atonement for sin by the death of Christ, of justification by faith, and regeneration by the Holy Ghost, underlie, and give tone and character to our evangelical religious

teaching, whether from the pulpit or the press. The lack of vigor in statement, and of clearness in elucidation, which I have named, is indeed to be lamented, and, as I believe, has something to do in occasioning the prevailing inefficiency, but there is certainly no wide-spread doctrinal unsoundness, working its destructive influences at the core of piety. From that calamity, may the good Lord long deliver us!

2. I remark in the second place, that our present inefficiency is not to be accounted for, by the presence, in our churches, of unbrotherly strifes and divisions. From these we were never more free. A few years ago, when the application of Christianity to social questions began to be agitated in connection with the reform movements of these times, collisions of opinion gave rise to personal alienations, and our churches often presented scenes of painful discord. In some sections the peace of our churches was, at a later period, disturbed by varieties of opinion on the near advent of our Saviour, and the disquietude which prevailed was, for the time, an effectual bar to progress. But at the present moment we are largely blessed with concord. Peace dwells within the walls of Jerusalem, though the prosperity which the Psalmist equally invoked, is not our blessing. We have occasion for profound gratitude to Him who is the author as well as lover of peace and concord, that in seeking out the occasions of our inefficiency, unbrotherly strifes and divisions are not found to be one of them.

3. Nor, finally, is our inefficiency to be explained by any lack in the system or comprehension of our plans to do good. Perhaps there never has been a time when plans for promoting religion were so perfect and far-reaching, as at the day in which we live. In our particular congregations, we have Sabbath schools in the most systematic operation, reaching with the living voice and with judicious and excellent books, the children and youth; we have, in addition to the regular preaching of the gospel, meetings for conference and prayer, and these generally so arranged, as to bring them to every neighborhood. In the larger towns, and probably in all the cities, we have organizations through which religious tracts are borne to every family that is willing to receive them; and in many cases, these silent messengers of mercy, are accompanied by the pious teachings of the tract distributor, or of the city missionary, whose mission, generally to the poor and outcast, is attested, like the mission of Him whom they serve, by the considerate and tender dispensation of temporal relief. And so comprehensive are our plans of Christian exertion, that there is scarcely a form of moral destitution on the face of the earth, which they are not prepared to reach. The youngest child that lisps in your Sabbath school, has a channel through which it may reach with its tiny benefaction the heathen infant of its own age, and pour into its dark mind the blessed illuminations of

Divine light. We have organizations by which we may all bear blessings to the destitute within the boundaries of our own civilization, and abroad wherever man sits perishing in the region and shadow of death. Everywhere we may dispense schools, the Bible, or the living voice of the missionary. The church of Christ has encompassed the world with the network of her charities, and put each individual of her myriad membership into communication with his race. She has arranged her wires so as to connect her own life with the life of humanity; alas! that the battery is so feeble as to leave the world, in a great measure, insensible to the shock.

Where then lies the difficulty? I shall state it comprehensively. We have not time to go into detail. We have seen that it is not in doctrinal unsoundness: error has not touched the church with her palsy. It is not to be found in the distractions of Zion; her members dwell in brotherly concord. It is not to be found in the want of arrangements and appliances through which Christians may bestow their labors: the plans of Christian exertion are wonderful for their minuteness and their comprehension. The church, in her present condition of inefficiency, reminds one most naturally of an immense factory, perfect in all the details of machinery, every portion working out precisely its designs, but all moving feebly, and accomplishing little compared with the expectations awakened by the scope and finish of the structure. What needs that factory? One word answers: POWER! Lift the gates! let on the flood! Then mark the change. The heavy walls tremble at the mighty struggles of the machinery. Every spindle feels the awakened energy, and starts with electrical speed into its mission. The whole structure now fulfils its design, and repays the skill and labor of those who have planned and formed it. And what needs the church? I answer, POWER. She is a ponderous engine, creeping silently over rails which she ought to shake by the energy and might of her irresistible movement. She is called to a noble mission; to be a co-worker with God in the salvation of the world; she has laid her plans with wonderful system and scope, and now needs only to be IN EARNEST. Earnestness is her great want. She is inefficient because she is not in earnest. Earnestness is the remedy to which she should hasten; the missing element in which she should seek, and in which she would find, her power.

I think I shall not be questioned in affirming a want of earnestness, as a characteristic of the religious devotion of our times. I certainly would not bring an unfounded accusation against the household of faith. I am ready to grant that the prevailing tone of Christian feeling, and the prevailing directions of religious effort, have in them much which merits commendation; but of that which calls for commendation, earnestness, the vigorous determination which settles and over all ob-

stacles achieves its purpose, is not an element. Go into almost any congregation which you may choose to select; you enter, it may be, a neat, or even an elegant structure; you sit on easy or even luxurious cushions, amid well-appareled and polite worshippers. The prayer, the hymn, the sermon, are adjusted to the nicest proprieties of taste; the quiet solemnity of the scene inspires a delicious awe, and the Christian retiring within himself, and contemplating only his own relations of justification, peace and hope, finds himself even at the gate of heaven. But admit into this assembly of Christian disciples another class of ideas; let a sense of the mission to which they are called be felt in their hearts; let the broad world, teeming with its myriad population, lay itself out before their vision, here darkened by ignorance, there pining under oppression, and everywhere marred by vice and wickedness; but all to be redeemed and regenerated through the instrumentality of Christian effort; let them feel that they are called into the favor of Christ, not to enjoy alone, but to work, and that while they sit idle the world perishes—and they would start from their seats as if struck with thoughts as novel as they were momentous; they would reproach themselves for their idleness and inefficiency, and from sincere hearts send up to heaven that first prayer of the converted soul, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

If, my brethren, a doubt of the inertness of the church lingers in your breasts, compare, I pray you, the zeal with which Christians labor in their Master's service with that with which they pursue the ends of secular life. Who serves God with half the zeal with which he follows wealth or fame? Who studies, plans, sacrifices, for Christ as he does for the world? Show me such illustrations of Christian devotion, and I will show you men and women with whom the present generation has little sympathy. Brethren, I am not extravagant when I say that a chill is upon us. It has invaded pulpit and pew;-we are participators in a common apathy—putting forth drowsy efforts, while the world, for whose salvation Christ has died, is every moment perishing through our neglect.

Let us now proceed to inquire, briefly, into the relations which earnest efforts bear to great results. Mark how worldly ends are accomplished. Do you see success attending the idle and inefficient? Never. The student rises to eminence and renown through the path of patient, intense, and never-intermitted application. Wealth is accumulated by similar processes of vigilance, care and daily toil. In social and political life, progress is the reward of conflicts of opinion, maintained with the ardor of a mission from heaven. Liberty, that priceless boon of God to man, which priests and princes have imagined they might dole out in limited quantities or withhold altogether, is ours, because the heroes of many generations have hewed their way to it through serried ranks, and over the

bodies of myriads who have fallen in the contests. The same wise decree which has made our bread the reward of sweating toil, has fixed the path to great and noble ends through difficulties at which timid spirits shrink and start back. The decree is illustrated by the history of the world, and is as irrepealable as any other ordinance of heaven.

But in how many breasts (alas! too often as an excuse for indolence or worldliness), the thought arises, that while all this is true as relating to worldly enterprises and ends, it has no application within the realm of religion. That most sacred doctrine of the Divine Sovereignty, is imagined to be best honored by a heartless and inefficient church! Heaven pardon the weakness and the folly! The Divine sovereignty is best honored by obedience; and the obedience which is required at our hands, is the obedience of an energetic and undivided heart. If you survey the history of the church of Christ, you find that in all ages its progress has been in proportion to its earnestness. Who ever witnessed the Holy Spirit's descent upon the impenitent, and their conversion to Christ, when Zion was sleeping and inert;—when no warnings came from her towers, and no prayers ascended from her scattered homes? You have seen revivals under earnest preaching, earnest praying, earnest exhorting, but never under other conditions. The ministers of religion, to whom, in these late days, God has given the honor of distinguished usefulness in saving the souls of men, have been earnest heralds of the cross—Payson, Davies, Edwards, Whitefield, Wesley. They seized and held the minds and hearts of their auditors, by the irresistible power of earnest remonstrance and persuasion. Ascend from these men to the Reformers, and you find them men of kindred energy. Luther, with the blessing of God, shook the world—Luther first shook himself. Luther felt himself charged with a mission, a mission of transcendent moment—and he brought to the service of Christ the highest earnestness of his nature. And this prince of Reformers but copied Paul and other spirits of apostolic days. Why, when Jew and Roman sought to quench the fires of the new religion, by the crucifixion of the Lord of glory, and the threatenings of priestly and civil vengeance on his followers, did not that religion expire, and its traces cease from the world? Because the Head of the church had committed the mission of its propagation to earnest men, who counted not their lives dear, if they might be found in Christ, surrounded by those whom they had led to his feet. The power of the apostolic church, so far as means were concerned (and of these only we now speak), was in its earnestness. Every member within its pale regarded himself as a witness for Christ, and as bound to bear such part as his talents and opportunities might allow, in the glorious work of the world's regeneration. If scattered abroad by persecution,

the blow that dispersed them, so far from disheartening them or weakening their influence, served rather to awaken their energies afresh, and everywhere they preached the word. How soon, despite the rage of kings, and the vain imaginings of the people, the earnest labors of the church, crowned with the blessing of God, brought the Roman empire, in outward form at least, to the feet of the crucified Nazarene. My brethren, the constitution of human nature teaches nothing; the experience of men, in the pursuits of the world, has no lessons for the children of light; the history of the church, modern and apostolic, is a mystery; or it is earnestness in the use of appointed means, and that only, which, under God, is required to secure the rapid regeneration of the world. "What is wanted," says John Angell James, in a late work on this subject, which I commend to your notice—"What is wanted, and all that is wanted, under God's blessing, for the world's conversion to Christ, is—an earnest ministry, and an earnest church." We need hearts fired with the impulse, and obeying the impulse of the prophet, when he uttered the text, "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof, as a lamp that burneth."

We pass then, to the concluding portion of these remarks, which will be devoted to some considerations relating to the means by which we may be aroused to that high earnestness which properly belongs to the Christian profession.

1. And I remark, first, that antecedent to any real improvement, we must be duly impressed with both the fact and the guilt of our present apathy. We must retire within ourselves, and putting our consciousness in the light of the Divine law, and of the examples of our Lord and his apostles, ask in all honesty our personal share in the inefficiency which marks the present state of things in the church, and with the purpose of owning the worst. And how is it? Which love we most, God or Mammon? Which most engrosses our hearts, the spiritual beauty of Zion, or the pleasures and fashions of the world? What engrosses the intense earnestness of our lives? We are earnest enough, but for what? Brethren,—men of business, toiling early and late, and eating the bread of carefulness, for what do you toil? Is it for the glory of your Redeemer, the triumphs of truth and peace on earth, and the salvation of a race treading on each other's steps in crowds to the death that never dies? or is it that you may use your accumulations for the displays and luxuries of life, and for the advancement of yourselves and families in worldly rank? We see no such earnestness for the advancement of religion, as we see for worldly success,—no such intensity in prayer as in enterprises of business,—no such zeal to save a soul as would indicate that soul to be worth more than all the treasures of the world. We

cannot abide the scrutiny of a truthful examination. It is written, that when the great apostle stood on the confines of life, looking back on the period of his service, and forward to the reckoning of the great day, he could say with a peaceful and approving heart, "I have finished my course,"—accomplished my mission,—done that which God gave me to do,—and now with the fruit of my toil, gathered and to be gathered, I go confidingly to my rest; "henceforth there is a crown laid up for me, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me in that day." But is there one of us that anticipates the privilege of uttering a dying testimonial like this? And yet such is the service which we owe to Christ. This is the zeal which should be the mark and the honor of the church. By how much we fall short of this measure, by so much are we guilty, and by so much may a perishing world confront and rebuke us in the judgment day. And we must see our delinquencies before we shall arouse from our apathy. The whole church must become conscious of her supinennss, and the guilt of it, before she will start into her primitive earnestness. and find her primitive strength. We have backslidden, and the path of return to God lies through the valley of repentance. Oh, that God would open our eyes, and teach us how deeply we have sinned, while giving to ourselves and to worldly ends, the energies of a life which belongs to Him, and to the regeneration of the race which His Son came to redeem!

2. In the second place, in order to the earnestness which properly characterizes the disciples of Christ, it is indispensable that we have a due sense of the mission to which we are called. No man becomes aroused to the highest earnestness of his nature who does not see and comprehend his work. It is the inspiration of high purposes which sets the soul on fire, and strengthens the arm for mighty deeds. And what has our Master given us to do? Behold, the field is the world. Over its broad surface are multitudes which no man can number, each individual of whom has a soul, a soul stained by sin, under the condemnation of God's law, doomed and waiting execution, yet capable of being saved through the merits of an infinite redemption; and our mission is to spread through the world the healing cry, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters;" to purify and exalt individual and social life till crime shall cease, and happiness become universal; till the truth shall spring from earth like summer flowers, and righteousness look down from heaven on scenes of peace and love; till Christ shall reign the Universal King, and the world redeemed become the vestibule of heaven. Such is our work. O Thou great author of the world's salvation, may our minds comprehend and our hearts warm to this mission! May its high aims and blessed results inspire us, and make us like Him, who himself the Leader of the work, when He saw that the

baptism of the Cross lay in the path to its achievement, was nevertheless impatient, straitened, till even that baptism was accomplished!

Finally, I remark, that if we would attain the true earnestness of Christian devotion, we must find it in the individual consecration to Christ which springs from a personal sense of the preciousness of his cross. We cannot manufacture an effective earnestness by any outward assiduities to which we may apply ourselves. True earnestness is an inward impulse awakened at the cross of Jesus Christ. "The love of Christ constraineth us," said the apostle to the Gentiles, when those who, measuring by more meagre views the value of the cross, accounted his intense energy as uncalled for and fanatical. If we are Christians, there have been times when a sense of personal unworthiness has weighed down our hearts with inexpressible anguish—when our sins have seemed too numerous and aggravated for even Divine Mercy to heal—and we have obtained no solace for our woe, till turning to the cross, and estimating the love of the infinite victim, we have found there the sufficient ransom, and have heard from his lips the precious voice of pardon and peace. Oh, how have our souls been ravished with a sense of His love, and with what sincerity and unreserve we have at such moments said,

"Here Lord, I give myself away,
'Tis all that I can do!"

And at such moments, what service were we not ready to perform for our Master? Whither were we not ready to go at his bidding? What would we not do to bring even one soul to his feet? And when, under the influence of such a personal consecration, we have passed our thoughts over the world, reflecting on its condition and necessities, and its possible and promised destiny, how have our hearts burned within us at the magnitude and blessedness of the mission of the church, and our feet hastened to the work which, in this wide scheme of beneficence, has been alloted to us! This was the true impulse of Christian earnestness. This was a type of that earnestness which alone can qualify the church of Christ for the conquest of the world. This is the toil which the Spirit's presence shall bless, and under whose warm devotion the solitary place shall blossom as the rose. There is no hope of revived earnestness which does not find its origin and its support in a sense of the Saviour's unspeakable love. The *cross* is the hope of the world, not only as the atonement for sin, but as the awakening impulse and sustaining power of that energy in the church of Christ, which shall bear its messages of mercy to every creature. Oh, that its power may rest upon *us*, that we may find in it the shelter of our own souls, and the motives to an earnestness in the service of Christ which shall

never flag till he shall call us home, and pronounce our work well done. Come thus, O Saviour, to all thy church—rouse her to new endeavors, and may thy cross be the power of God to the world's speedy regeneration!

SERMON CCCCXCII.

BY REV. J. MANNING SHERWOOD.

THE WARNING VOICE.

MARK 13, 37.—"*And what I say unto you, I say unto you all, Watch.*"

Christ is no vain alarmist, When He bids us, beware—watch—there is always occasion for the warning, and we slight it at our peril. Dangers throng our path; enemies lie in wait to surprise; temptations assail at all points; and evil influences, within and without, are continually operating to seduce and ruin the soul. And we must watch.

1. WATCH AGAINST EVIL THOUGHTS. We are creatures of thought. The mind is always thinking; it is the occupation of every rational being; every day is filled up with thoughts; not even the "night watches" are free from them. To how many thoughts does a man give being and immortality, even during this short life! And thoughts are not the vain and powerless things that men take them to be; they are the "seeds" of all things; they are immensely prolific of good or evil; there is life or death in them. For, thoughts make the man! They are the parent of feeling and of action. They constitute, mainly, a man's being—exercise and control it—and rule his life and destiny. The character of one's habitual thinking, determines all his mental habits and moral exercises and attributes, and gives tone and complexion to his daily conduct, If his habitual thoughts are thoughts of levity, his mental being and visible life will quickly come to bear the marks of emptiness, vanity, contemptibleness, and folly. If his thoughts are habitually impure, his inner life will be corrupt, and his inward corruption will flow out into his language and conduct, in spite of every restraint or barrier. If his ruling thoughts are worldly, selfish, or irreligious, they will make his spirit and life such in their prevailing purposes and habits. No man can think wrong habitually, and do right; cherish evil thoughts daily, and be pure in spirit or virtuous in life. He who sows to the wind, in this respect, is sure to reap the whirlwind.

A man never sins in deed, until he has first sinned in thought. No matter how sudden or great is the temptation, he never yields and falls till the mind acts, thinks, wills. It is evil thoughts that invite temptations, and prepare the moral feelings to look with favor upon them, or at least to make but a feeble resistance. If the real history of men's apostacies could be written, it would be seen that the way is previously prepared, and all the safeguards and barriers to virtue and piety, broken down and swept away, by evil thinking. Let a man keep out from his mind evil thoughts, and he is in no danger; his life will take care of itself, or rather, God will keep his feet from falling, his eyes from tears, and his soul from death. But let him once open the door of his mind to evil thoughts—it matters not what their

object is—let them prowl at large and revel undisturbed in the chamber of the soul—and he is no longer master of his own house, and can no more rule his spirit or control his life, than he can chain the winds or calm the tempest: "a strong man armed" has taken possession: so many devils are let loose upon him, and if he do not "cast them out" by the power of prayer and repentance, they will as certainly defile and rule and ruin him, as that they are evil.

Let us beware, then, of evil thoughts. To harbor them is to harbor a merciless tyrant, who will fetter every attribute of the godlike soul, and kill the very life of virtue; to harbor them is to harbor moral defilement, and guilt, and death itself; nay, to habor evil thoughts is to harbor so many devils, who will riot on all that is fair and good within, and drive the possessed mortal on and down to eternal perdition! Beware of evil thoughts! Watch against them—pray and strive against them! The mastery over these is everything—virtue, obedience, life everlasting; but defeat here is the loss of all things—self-command, the grace of God, the hope of heaven, the soul itself, with its power of endless thinking and endless happiness!

2. WATCH AGAINST AN EVIL SPIRIT. This is one of the most insidious forms that sin ever takes. Its workings constitute a fearful illustration of the heart's deceitfulness. There is a degree of blindness and moral obliquity in relation to it, that is hard to account for. It is more difficult to make a man see and own that his spirit is bad, than to convince him of any other wrong. There is no sin that we are more prone to indulge in; none that it is so easy to cover up; none that men are more ready to excuse in themselves. And yet, in the whole catalogue of sins, not one can be found fuller of meanness, malignity, and all manner of evil. A BAD SPIRIT! Why, what good thing does it nourish, or speak well of, or spare? It sours a man's disposition, and renders him habitually peevish, fretful, censorious, fault-finding, unmerciful. Such a man breeds a moral pestilence in the community in which he lives; stirs up all the wrathful elements with which he happens to come in contact.

A bad spirit is sure to wither every generous thought and pure feeling; it will load the tongue with the poison of asps; it will see much evil and but little good in others; and it will, in the end, vitiate and pervert a man's entire influence. And yet how common is this sin. With what ease and facility do men fall into it! We have only to indulge our natural feelings—let the bitter waters of the heart flow; nay, we have only to neglect to cultivate the spirit of charity, meekness, love and forgiveness, and straitway the spirit of evil rules the temper, and speaks out in every act.

Here, then, we are to build a watch-tower, and plant a sentinel, and charge him, on peril of his life, to keep the city. Failing to do it, how many are injured in character and usefulness, if not personally ruined. O, with what jealousy should we watch and try our hearts, to know what manner of spirit we are of! One may be actuated by a very bad spirit, when he little suspects it. His denunciations of sin may be but the expressions of his unholy selfish passions. The opinions which he declares respecting his fellow-sinners, may be but his cherished and uttered wishes. His zeal for God, may be but low ambition.

3. WATCH AGAINST SPIRITUAL DECLENSION. How frequent and how sad are the instances of religious declension! How many who run well for a season, come to slacken their pace, and then to halt, and it may be, finally to turn back, How many who espouse Christ and his cause with zealous hearts and an earnest profession, at length lose their first love, and sadly decline in their religious interest, and deteriorate in their Christian character. Why is this? Is it not mainly because we are not half alive to the danger of such a declension, and do not watch against it with sufficient carefulness and prayerfulness?

Piety will not live of itself, in beings partially sanctified; the graces of the Spirit, in such natures as ours, will not grow and bring forth fruit unto life is we withhold the hand of diligent culture. Let a man neglect his

piety—do nothing to foster, invigorate and keep it alive, and it will die out in a very little while; let him cease to watch and pray, strive and cultivate, and all his spiritual interests will quickly decay, and his soul become a barren waste. Piety, here on earth, is an exotic plant, and great care and pains are needed to make it grow in so unfriendly a soil, and to protect it from the chilling winds and blighting frosts of so ungenial a clime. Keep it away from the sunshine and moisture, and pure air of Divine grace, or neglect to care for it, and leave it to take its chance, and what can make it fruitful, or even keep it alive? Let a Christian, for example, leave his faith to stand alone—to shift for itself, or to live by its inherent vitality and power, and how long will it be a living faith? It must be strengthened by constant exercise—nourished by prayer and the study of the Scriptures; pinions must be given to it, and it must be helped to mount and fly, or it will die a natural death, or at least become a lifeless principle: and just so of every other Christian grace.

All the tendencies of human nature are towards declension, deterioration, in moral and spiritual things, and it possesses, in itself, no compensative or reclaiming power. These tendencies are numerous, strong, decided, and are ever operative; they draw with the strength of a Leviathan, and make the declivity to apostasy, and on to perdition, steep and slippery. All the influences of this world also, as well as the temptations of Satan, tend the same way. And what is to counteract such a world of depletive, wayward, corrupting influences, and to preserve the "life of God in the soul?" There is nothing in religion itself, in such circumstances, to perpetuate its own life, secure its proper growth and development, defeat these fatal tendencies, and hold one near to God, independently of his own exertions. If he will not use the appropriate means, there is nothing in God, nothing in the nature of religion, to keep the soul from sliding back with a perpetual backsliding. If he will not nourish and culture the grace of God in the soul, and thereby keep it fruitful, He will not hinder its return to its natural state of barrenness. If he will not hold on to the promises with the power of faith and prayer, He will not put forth His hand to arrest the natural process of decay, and stay the otherwise inevitable tendency of human corruption.

And here is where all declensions in religion begin, not from without, but from within; not in overt transgressions, but in a personal falling away from God, in the habits and experience of the soul. The inward fire is suffered to go down—the heart's first love to decline—the graces of the spirit to languish—then corruption regains its power, and the world comes in with the power of a flood, and the Devil prevails. O, how sad, and yet instructive is the history of men's experience in this thing! How imminent is our danger! What arm less than Omnipotence, continually invoked, can save us from declension—from a fatal apostasy? Let us heed the warning and watch—watch against any decline of interest in spiritual things—watch against any falling off in the heart's love to God and to his cause—watch against any inroads upon our spiritual temper and habits; any going back to the weak and beggarly elements of the world.

4. WATCH AGAINST THE NEGLECT OF RELIGIOUS DUTIES. Christian duty on earth is a work of difficulty and self-denial, in which there is always something to be overcome or borne, requiring both effort and endurance. The explanation of this singular fact is found, not in the nature of religion or its requirements, but simply in human corruption. There is enough of sin's sluggish spirit left in the Christian, to make a strong effort heavenward somewhat painful, and all spiritual exercises to cost him something; and enough of corruption remaining, to make duties, which ought to be his delight and pleasure, crosses, self-denials, often irksome and wearisome. Consequently, the performance of spiritual duties always costs an effort; there is required the power of resolution and of a moral bracing up, in order to overcome the natural tendency of things. The law of nature here is in opposition to the law of grace; and that law is not dead, nor is it a weak one

The Christian does not enter upon his religious duties from day to day as a matter of course, or from the power of preference of natural feeling; he is not drawn to his closet, drawn to the meeting for social prayer, drawn out into the field of Christian enterprise and toil, by any such natural law as almost irresistably draws the man of business to his daily duties, or the man of pleasure to his enjoyments. Far otherwise. In every step he takes heavenward—in every duty he engages in, he has to rise above these earthly tendencies, and conquer all that is inborn by the sought and realized aid of Divine grace. Who that ever honestly tried to walk the path of Christian duty, has not felt this fatal tendency, chilling, at times, the very life of his soul, and rendering duty formal, and even irksome, and again overcoming his resolution and drawing him away from duty, and restraining prayer, and shutting him up to despondency and barrenness!

Such being the case, the danger of neglecting spiritual duties is very great—and no man can avoid the danger. Such neglect, in part or total, requires no effort on our part; it is the easiest thing in the world to slide into a careless and negligent religious habit; it may cost not one inward struggle, not a tear, not a resolution even, to get away from God, and from prayer, and from every religious duty! There is no long and painful road to be gone over in departing from God; in giving up secret prayer, and family prayer, or any other duty. We have only to stand still a little season, and let things take their natural course; just cease our wonted effort, and let the current of our thoughts and inclinations flow in their own chosen channels, and soon we shall find ourselves at a great moral distance from God, and maintaining no sort of intercourse with him! We have only to neglect to watch against neglect, and straightway, our closet is forsaken; duty and the soul are become strangers to each other; and, as a religious being, we have made a frightful retrograde movement. Oh, how wonderful and alarming are the facilities to declension, to neglect of duty, and even to open and fatal apostasy made ready to our hands!

And, knowing our danger, shall we not watch, and strive, and pray against it? Can we fold our arms and quiet our fears, and leave our religious duties to take care of themselves? Let us rather plant a sentinel at the door of our hearts, and charge him in the name of Christ and of duty, and in behalf of our spiritual interests, to WATCH with all Christian fidelity and prayer, against inward declension and outward neglect; to resist, even unto blood, those fatal tendencies, inwrought into our very natures, which are ever drawing the soul toward worldliness, and formality, and spiritual indolence. Above all, let us invoke the spirit of the living God, to keep our hearts for us, and keep alive our graces, and make us lively and faithful in duty.

5. Above all, we should WATCH AGAINST A SURPRISE BY DEATH. The danger in every man's case is—and it is real and great—that, notwithstanding so many warnings and premonitions, death will steal on him at last, as a thief in the night, and find him sleeping. Few living men are quite ready to die, or would be willing to die without warning, precisely as they live from day to day. Whenever we think of death, there is a resolution entertained to seek a higher fitness; there is a felt consciousness of insufficiency; the remembrance of sins not put away, and of duties deferred, instantly arises in the mind. And yet, it is a most solemn and instructive thought, that most men die as they live; with the same essential character, and the same mental habits. If our life is an impenitent life, our death is almost certain to be an impenitent death; if we live unprepared for eternity, we shall, (unless our case prove a rare exception) die at last without hope. If we profess to be Christians, and yet are slothful, negligent, prayerless, and confessedly living far away from God, in the daily habit and practice of life, in that same fearful state we shall in all probability die. Whatever duty or service we neglect, living, whether it relate to our own soul, to our children, to the church, or to the impenitent, we are almost sure to die and not perform. The character that a man maintains through life, with here and there

a solitary exception, he will die with, and carry up to the judgment. Whatever he may think, or purpose, or flatter himself to believe, he will, so to speak, stand before God at last in his every-day dress. There will be no change of raiment when death shall come; the thoughts and the habits, and the sins of his life, will go with him up to the bar of God.

The truth is, most men are the dupes of a good resolution. They mean to repent and seek God's favor before they die; they have no thoughts of dying as they live; but, alas! the heart's deceitfulness, and the providence of God, cheat their intentions. Death takes them by surprise. Not one person in a hundred, probably, dies the death he expects to die, or by the disease he imagines will end his days. Very few die when, or where, or in the manner they anticipate. One may be expecting death long, and yet, at last, it comes at an hour or in a way unexpected, and he is surprised. I have often been surprised at this fact. There is a marked and warning Providence in it. There is a fearful significance in the Saviour's words, "Watch, therefore, for you know not what hour your Lord doth come."

God would have us LIVE religion, if we mean to reap its consolations in death, and its rewards beyond. If our eternal hopes hang only upon our intentions, they are not worth a straw. If we are living as we would be unwilling to die, we shall, most likely, die without hope. What we each are to-day, and have been in years past, and expect to be in future years, if God spare us, we shall, in all probability, be, at the hour of death, and forever after. It is a startling truth. It is a warning voice that we do well to heed. "What! am I to die just as I am now living---with no other preparation---in my present character---with so many duties neglected---with so many sins upon me---with so little relish for holiness---so little of the spirit of angels and glorified saints! My God! let me not be deceived; let me anticipate the day of my dying; and what I would be then, let me seek to be now, and every day and hour of my life."

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SERMON CCCCXCIII.

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SOLOMON'S EXPERIENCE AND OBSERVATION.

"Therefore I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me; for all is vanity and vexation of spirit."—Eccles. ii. 17.

THERE are few parts of the sacred Scriptures more difficult of interpretation than the one which contains this text. The style of the Book is peculiar; and the rapid transition of thought from one subject to another, and from one state of mind to another—a transition often made without any express mention of it—throws an air of obscurity, and, indeed, sometimes an appearance of contradiction over the sentiments uttered.

Hence, the most extravagant ideas have sometimes been deduced from it;—the most mischievous, the most absurd. Some expressions in it have been employed in a manner which might well rejoice libertines; and the licentious themselves have sometimes seized upon ideas contained in it, to justify all the extravagances of an unbridled licentiousness. They have very eloquently repeated that passage in the seventh verse of the ninth chapter, "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart," as if it were a fit motto for a man of pleasure. With equal animation and eloquence, they have recited that passage in the twenty-forth verse of the second chapter—"There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour," as if it were designed to give loose reins to indulgence.

And infidelity, as well as libertinism, has made itself merry over the supports supposed to be found in some of these chapters. It has called ideas found here contradictory—the whole Book a jumble of inconsistencies. Bringing together the second verse of the

second chapter—" I said of laughter it is mad, and of mirth what doeth it ;" and the fifteenth verse of the eighth chapter—" Then I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry ; infidelity has put on a malignant smile, as if she had found at once a refutation of the Bible in its inconsistency, and liberty for the indulgence of chosen " amusements" and sensuality.

Libertines and infidels are not always worth noticing. Most of their pretences are a compound of folly and falsehood, both silly and dishonest. And when men have descended so low as *that* they are ordinarily best treated, when left to become wise and right, or not, just as they shall choose. Many a foolish man has become confirmed in error, when his error has been dignified by noticing it.—But some of these ideas are worthy of notice ; especially, as the notice of them may lead us to a just understanding of the writer of this Book ; and as some serious minds also have been embarrassed by expressions contained in it.

The text before us has not escaped misconception : *I hated life because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me.* This has been said to justify an entire disgust with life. It has also been adduced as a proof, that a man of religious sentiments must be so far led off from the ordinary feelings of humanity as to *hate life* and the world ; and must therefore be unfit for society, in respect to enjoying it, or aiming to promote its good. And, it may be, that a true believer sometimes, in dejection and trouble, may, seek to justify the gloom of his sentiments, and his dark dislike of a wearisome life, by supposing himself to resemble the author of the text—*I hated life.*

Before, therefore, we enter upon the special consideration of the text itself, we propose to furnish an explanation of the peculiarities of this Book ; a matter which seems necessary, not only for a just explanation of the text itself, but for justifying the explanation, and for guarding the Book in general from misconstruction.

On this point we have several ideas to present. We want your entire attention. We are going to teach you a matter for you to remember whenever you read this Book of Solomon.

To this object we devote this sermon. We will attend to the particular idea of the text hereafter.

Let us enter upon the subject. Let us learn how to interpret the Book before us—a Book containing some expressions which sound strange to many ears.

We make one remark, as a clue to the meaning of the author, as a key to unlock the mysteries hidden here, as a wand to sweep away the fogs and clouds, which infidelity, worldliness, and libertinism, (always superficial), have hung round the expressions of this author. The remark is this :—That almost the entire sum of this

Book is composed in the style of *experience* and *observation*. In some passages the writer speaks from experience. In others, he speaks from observation. In others still, he mingles both these together, grounding his ideas on both what he had *seen* and what he had himself *felt*.

1. He speaks as a man of *experience*. Examine the sixteenth and seventeenth verses of the first chapter: "I communed with mine own heart, saying, lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem; yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge. And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly." So in the second chapter, to the end of the tenth verse, he speaks of his own experience. "I said in mine heart, go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore, enjoy pleasure . . . I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine . . I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards; I made me gardens and orchards." And he goes on to tell of his *servants*, and *cattle*, and *singers*, and *silver*, and *gold*, and *delights*, not "withholding his heart from any joy." In the same style of experience he utters the fifteenth verse of the eighth chapter (already cited,) "Then I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat and to drink, and to be merry."—The same style of experience, of history, of autobiography, runs through the book.

If ever there was a man qualified by the experience of it, to tell what pleasure is worth, that man was Solomon, the author of the Book before us. He was "king over Israel in Jerusalem," in the days of its highest splendor. His proud city glittered with gold. It abounded in luxury—in every refinement. To its glory all the civilized world had contributed Egypt had sent thither in profuse abundance the finest of her wheat. The east had sent the choicest of her delicacies,—the aroma of her plants to breathe their perfumes on the air of Palestine, and the glitter of her gems to flash in the sun-light abroad, or adorn the persons that moved amid the splendour of her proud palaces at home. The South and the West had contributed all the adornments of architecture. Science and art had contributed to the enjoyments of taste. Arabia had sent in her mathematics. Tyre and Sidon their purple and fine linens. Poesy sang. Music found a home there. And amid all these resources and all this splendor, Solomon gave loose reins to his desires to enjoy them all, better situated than ever man was, before or since, to prove by his own experience what the pleasures of the world are worth. And in this Book, he has given us an account of the whole matter. He has summed it up in five words—VANITY AND VEXATION OF SPIRIT. He summed it up (just as you would have done if you had had his wisdom and trial), on the ground of his own experience. He

had tried it all, and knew what was its value; and as he recapitulates to us in this Book his experiences, he tells us how he turned from one pleasure to another, and one earthly promise to another, with the sickening feeling, *this also is vanity.*—It is on this principle that he makes his remarkable introduction—an introduction which has no parallel or resemblance in any other writing that we have ever seen: "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, vanity of vanities, all is vanity." He spake from the heart; he was a man of experience. He had tried "*amusements.*"

Now let me ask you to notice, in his own phraseology, how this remark about his style is applicable. Commence with the text itself. "I hated life, because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me." *When* did he hate it? How are we to understand him? Is he telling us what he thinks *now?* or what he thought while his reason was entranced and he was pursuing the vanities of the world?—If you were to write your own biography, how would you write it? Suppose you had been eagerly pursuing some object for a time, and afterwards had altered your sentiments in distaste and disappointment, and still afterwards had set your heart upon something very different, and suppose you were going to employ your own experience as an argument to persuade other people to take a wiser way than you had taken at first, how would you be apt to express yourself? You would have three different points to hold up. At one time, you would mention the sentiments you entertained at *the period* when you were eagerly pursuing your favorite object. At another time, you would mention the sentiments you entertain at *the period* when you had concluded to abandon it. At another time, you would mention the sentiments you entertain *now*, when having set your heart upon another object, you are aiming, by the force of your own experience to induce your friend to shun the error and copy the wisdom of your example. And if you were much gifted in the art of persuasion, your ideas would move backwards and forwards from one of these periods to another, in order to bring into frequent contrast the benefits of one course and the evils of its opposite—Well: Solomon has done precisely this in the book before us. He has done just as you would have done. He states his sentiments after his recovery from error, and while he is under the direction of Divine wisdom. He states his sentiments in the outset. And he states his sentiments in the intermediate time—in the day of his disappointment, when he had got no farther than to hear and feel the *rebuke* of truth, but had not yet taken its positive direction. And he passes from one of these to another, under no rule but that of the heart's logic, more intent on persuasion than on the name of scholarship. And when he says, "I hated life, because the work that is wrought under the sun is grevious unto me," there is no difficulty in perceiving

to *what period* of his heart's history he alludes. Manifestly he does not express his *present* sentiments. He speaks of the past; he employs what the grammarians call the "past tense," *I hated life:* he does not say he hates it now. Just as manifestly, he does not express the sentiments he entertained when he was persuing, with all the zest of his heart, the vanities of the world. The expression refers to the other period—to the time of his disappointment, disgust, and dissatisfaction—to the moment when he awoke from his dream, and found it *was* a dream: *I hated life.* Nothing is more natural, He had been living for mere pleasure. It did not satisfy him. It could not. He knew of nothing better to live for. His pleasures palled upon his senses—his heart was sick—he was disgusted with life itself: *I hated life.*

It may be that some of you can sympathize with him, far enough at least to understand him. Tax your recollection. Has there been no moment when you were disgusted with life itself? Have you not felt so? When your plans have been dashed, or your pride mortified, or your hearts have sickened amid your worldly vanities, or your health has failed and your spirits sunk and all the world seemed to you a bubble, a dream; have you not wondered what you lived for; and amid this empty and sickening scene, been disgusted with life itself? Very well; Solomon would have you feel so. He would convince you that sooner or later you *must.* He would employ this feeling as an argument, *first* to turn off the heart from the world's deceitful promises, and *second,* to turn it to something better—to that love and service of God, wherein life shall be as valuable, as, spent upon the world, it ought to be disgusting—Do not stop with your disgust. Follow Solomon faster. Heart-sick of the world, do not ask merely in distaste and despondency, what do I live for? or, in disgust and despair, do not wish you had never lived at all. Turn to the great and valuable ends of your existence, which Solomon has summed up in the closing sentence of this Book, and calls the *conclusion of the whole matter*—"Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man, for God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil."

On the same principle we interpret the verses immediately after the text. "Yea I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun, because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me. And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool?" So he felt when he had become disgusted with his dissipation, and *before* he had turned him to labour for another life and another world. How natural his expression! It is an artist sketch of the heart of a selfish man! "I hated labor, because I should leave it, unto the man that shall be after me," *wise or fool.* He must leave it, be it crown, or gold, or splendor. He must leave it, and perhaps

the son that inherits it shall be a *fool!* He must leave it; and this was the lament of his selfishness, at the time of his disgust with life. If he had now been a man of benevolence, it might have given him some satisfaction, that what he should leave behind him might contribute something to the good of his successor. But he was not yet a man of religious benevolence. He was a man of selfishness, and of selfish disgust and dissatisfaction, mourning that he must leave his gold to his heir, and exchange his royal purple for the shroud of the tomb.

In the expression, "who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool, yet shall he have rule over all my labor," possibly Solomon utters his present sentiments, and not the sentiments of his period of disgust. We told you that the sentiments of these two periods were sometimes mingled together in his argument. Take your choice betwixt the two. Neither is very unnatural. A wise man, a pious man, may very well feel that his living for another world has an enforcement from the fact, that his heirs may be fools, and the inheritance he leaves them may do them no good: this reflection may very well come in, to check his remaining worldliness of spirit, or to induce him to do good with his possessions *before* he is dead, and others shall employ them to do hurt. A man disgusted with life and the world may very well find his sentiments of disgust strengthened by the idea, that all his labors and possessions may be as vain for his children as they have been for himself. *Fools* may be his heirs! *fools* may take the avails of his labor! and as he thinks of it, his increased disgust may exclaim, "this also is vanity."

On the same principle we interpret the fifteenth verse of the eighth chapter. It is a piece of autobiography. The author is telling, not what is his opinion *now*, but what his opinion was once; not what it was in his period of disgust with life, but what it was before that, in the period of his dissipation. "I commended mirth"—(he does not commend it *now*),—"I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat and to drink and to be merry." So he thought in his season of pleasure and dissipation.

He thought there was *nothing better*. He thought just as the silly sons of pleasure think now. He confesses it to them. He tells them that he has been over their ground, he has tried the whole matter, he was once foolish enough to feel as they feel, "that there is nothing better under the sun than to eat and to drink and to be merry," And now, as a man of experience, as an old hand in the business, who has been through the whole, and knows all about it, he claims to be heard, when he tells them, "this also is vanity—it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God" (viii. 13). —Young men would do well to hear him. He ought to be heard. Besides his inspiration, he was now an old man. He was an

experienced man. He had run the whole round of pleasure. He had justified it. He had said as they say, that "there is nothing better than to eat and to drink and to be merry." Now he knows better. He knows those of such merriment and dissipation do not *fear* God, it cannot be *well with them:* and when he says that "the wicked shall not prolong his days which are as a shadow;" young men should remember that he who lives to *eat and to drink and to be merry* will not live long; and, however screened and hidden may be this drinking and merriment now, it will not be hidden long—"God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing."—He does not plead for "amusements."

On the same principle we interpret a multitude of other expressions found in this Book. "I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine. . . . I made me great works: I builded me houses, and planted me vineyards; I made me gardens and orchards; . . . I gathered me silver and gold; I got me men-singers and women-singers; . . . I commended mirth; . . . I said, drink thy wine with a merry heart; . . . live joyfully; let thy garments be always white and thy head lack no ointment;"—these, all these, are expressions of the sentiments which Solomon entertained in the days of his pleasure.

You cannot err in fixing upon the passages which express his sentiments *after* the days of his pleasure were ended. The Book is full of them. After pleasure palled upon his senses, and his heart sickened with disgust of life; he chose something more wise than either—he turned to religion. His sentiments *now* are uttered in such passages as that, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them. Fear God and keep his commandments; this is the whole of man—" his duty, felicity, and interest. "Though a sinner do evil an hundred times and his days be prolonged" (as sometimes they may be), "yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God . . . but it shall not be well with the wicked." (Ch. xii. 1, 13,—viii. 12, 13.) Looking on the world, all its pleasure, pomp, and promise, he turns from one thing to another, *this also is vanity*. Looking at the trials and fears that cluster around the pathway of life, he says, "he that feareth God shall come forth of them all." (vii. 18). Looking forth into another world, he sees that the retribution of *that* shall clear up the confusions of this, "for God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (xii. 14).

Let this suffice on the head of *experience*. It is plain that Solomon in this Book gives much of his own heart's history, as an argument for religion; and that he makes three points prominent: *first*, his sentiments in the period of his indulgence; *second*, his

sentiments in the period of his disgust with life; and *third*, his sentiments in the after-period—the period of his piety.

II. A second characteristic of the style of this Book is a little variation from this: much of it is in the style of *observation*. The author not only states what his heart had felt, but what his eyes had seen. He does this for the same purpose, namely, to persuade men, especially young men, to religion. He draws an argument for it, from things that met his eyes. And while he is pursuing the argument, he sometimes unites, *with* the account of what he had noticed, the sentiments he entertained at the different periods we have mentioned. This also, is perfectly natural. You would have done the same thing. If you had wished to persuade any person, you would both have mentioned the facts, (what your eyes had seen), and your own feelings in view of them—your feelings at different times.

You cannot but be convinced, that Solomon argues as an observer, when you notice the abundance of passages like the following (i. 14—"I have SEEN all the works that are done under the sun, and behold all is vanity." (iii. 16)—"I SAW under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there, and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there." (v. 13)—"There is a sore evil which I have SEEN under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt." (If he had lived till this time he might have seen the same thing,) (vi. 1, 2)—"There is an evil which I have SEEN under the sun, and it is common among men; a man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honor, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it." (viii. 9)—"All this have I SEEN, and applied my heart unto every work that is done under the sun: there is a time wherein one man ruleth over another to his own hurt." (viii. 16, 17—"When I applied my heart to know wisdom, and to SEE the business that is done upon the earth. . . . then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun, because, though a man labor to seek it out, yet he shall not find it." (x. 7)—"I have SEEN servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth." (He would see it now, if he were alive.) (ix. 11)—"I returned and SAW under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill, but time and chance happeneth to them all." (He knew no better. He thought so then. He could see no farther. He was a fool. He thought it was mere *time and chance* at that period, the period of distaste, which preceded his pious recognition of God.)

All these passages, and an abundance of others, prove to us,

that Solomon composed this Book as a man of observation: that he makes use of the things which his own eyes had "SEEN under the sun," to point the maxims and give strength to the arguments he utters.

We said it would be perfectly natural, that, while aiming to persuade young men to religion, he should tell them not only the facts which fell under his observation, but also his feelings in view of them at the time. He has done this—just as you would have done. Notice his account of some facts in the first verse of the fourth chapter, and his feelings in view of them in the second and third verses: "So I returned and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun, and behold, the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter, and on the side of the oppressors there was power: but THEY had no comforter." (You may judge of the keenness of his observation by this last clause.) Then follows an account of the feelings he had in view of all this, when he noticed it at first: "Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead, more than the living which are not yet alive. Yea, better is he than both they which hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun." So he thought *then*. He thought *the dead* were more to be envied than *the living*. He thought it would have been better still, never to have been born. Who would *not* think so, if he had only eyes to see earthly things; and had no faith, the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen?

A similar account of his feelings at that time, is recorded in the second verse of the ninth chapter, when he felt more like a Deist than a believer: "All things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous and the wicked: to the good and to the clean and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth and to him that sacrificeth not; as is the good so is the sinner; and he that sweareth as he that feareth an oath." So he thought *then*. He knew no better *then*. Mere observers are apt to think so. He thought differently afterwards; he extended his contemplation beyond visible things —things *under the sun*, as he calls *them* so often and so significantly. Though it may be true, as far as eyes can see, "that there is one event to all," yet he did not therefore adopt that pernicious maxim, "let us eat and drink for to-morrow we shall die." He came very near doing so; he wishes young men to know it. But he avoided that rock on which so many make shipwreck of their faith and their philosophy at the same time. He said, "I know it shall be well with them that fear God; it shall not be well with the wicked," (viii. 12, 13).

III. There is a third charcteristic of the style of this Book, not necessary to mention indeed for the interpretation of this text, as the others *were*, but, considering the nature of this sermon, and to

complete the ground-work for the interpretation of the whole Book, we mention it here,—It is Solomon's *keen irony*. He was aiming to persuade men, especially young men, to religion. No easy task! Their blood warm—their hopes ardent—death to them, apparently far-off, and the world dressed in such tempting smiles and splendor before their eyes, they will naturally cling to its gaiety and merriment. they will say they were made for it, and *it* was made for them; they do not see any harm in it, and they *do* see, there is "one event to them all, to the righteous and the wicked," they are about alike in misery here, and they die alike.—Solomon responds to such sentiments in his keenest irony. He affects to agree with them. He takes up these sentiments and just preaches them back into the bosoms they came from—preaches just as these merry young men want him to preach. (ix. 7)—"Go thy way; eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart, for now God accepted thy works:" That is the way they want him to preach; and in irony, in cutting sarcasm, he does it: he yields to them, and tells them that their wine and merriment are acceptable to God, on their own principles. Then he goes on with the sermon for which they have furnished the text: carry out thy principles then: "let thy garments be always white, and let thy head lack no ointment. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest, all the days of thy VANITY, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy VANITY," (he cannot help repeating it): "for that is thy portion in this life," (all you are good for), "and in thy labor which thou takest under the sun" (all you can get on your own principles). "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do," (music, merriment, mirth, wine, no matter what foolery), do it with thy might," (now or never), "for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither tho goest." What cutting irony! Their own principles, carried out, just about make beasts of them! (iii. 18). They must labor here for nothing but vanity, and die, but to rot. Go on, them, if that is all you were made for, eat and drink, for to-morrow you shall die. (Isa. xxii. 13).

The same species of irony may be found in the ninth verse of the eleventh chapter. The author is preaching back his own sentiments into the bosom of a young man, *expecting to live many years and rejoice in them*, and therefore indisposed to religion. With severe sarcasm, he reminds him that youth vanishes, as the young man wishes to live in pleasure, and neglect God. Go on then! carry out your principles! "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth," (they will soon be gone—haste in mirth or you cannot have it), "and walk in the ways of thine heart" (if you will), "and in the sight of thine eyes" (live as you list);—and then the preacher adds a solemn idea of his own, for this merry youth to carry along with

him in his pleasure ;—" but *know thou*, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. Therefore, remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh ;" fear nothing, care for nothing but pleasure, if you will, in this " childhood and youth," which are vanity :—and *because* youth is soon gone, and death soon comes, and the judgment after it;—be a fool and be merry; you say there is nothing better!—If Solomon was deep in experience and extensive in observation, he was also as remarkably keen in his irony.

The discussion of the text itself will come hereafter. These remarks on the style of this Book, lead me to utter some counsels.

I. Beware how you interpret its expressions. For example, when you read in the second chapter, " To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven : a time to be born and a time to die ; a time to kill and a time to heal ; a time to mourn and a time to dance ; a time to hate ; a time of war ; do not be so superficial as to suppose, that Solomon is enjoining or justifying war, and hatred, and dancing, and killing. Put the whole chapter under its proper head. It belongs to the chapter of *observation*. He is only stating facts as they were; things he saw, and not telling how they should be.—Apply this advice to his expressions of experience and of irony also. Hence,

2. See what is the great drift and purpose of this Book ; namely, to persuade, young men especially, to fear God, keep his commandments, and fit for the day of judgment. This is its sole aim. In accordance with this, all its particular expressions are to be interpreted. If you interpret them wisely, now, " in the days of your youth, " they will give you an eye fixed on the judgment seat of Christ.

3. Aim to copy Solomon's mode of reasoning—spread out his argumentation as wide as you will. *Be* observers. Look at the world—its life, death, gold, honor, merriment, wine, wisdom labor laughter, tears, all that is in it, all that is visible of the works of *God under the sun ;* and then ask yourselves solemnly, if all this does not amount to an overwhelming argument, that there is something better for you *beyond the sun*, which you ought first and forthwith to seek after.—Add your own experience to Solomon's. He found the world vanity. What have you found it ? He sometimes even hated life. So will you ; if you do not employ it for the life to come. Have you not found it " vexation of spirit" already ? Deeper vexations are in store for you, if you will not live unto God. Do you need any deeper ones ? Have you not enough already to convince you, that your heart runs wrong, when it runs upon the world ; and that your affections and purposes aught not any longer to lie supremely upon a world, which can only furnish you, as an unbeliever, two things—vanity and a grave?

SERMON CCCCXCIV.

BY REV. I. S. SPENCER, D.D.

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HATRED OF LIFE.

"Therefore I hated life, because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of spirit."—Ecclesiastes ii. 17.

We directed your attention to this passage on a former occasion. At that time, we desired to lay the foundation of a just interpretation of it. We could not *then* do more in the space of time your indulgence allows to us. We propose now a more close attention to the text itself. But it will be necessary to advert to the principle we then laid down—a principle needful to be kept steadily in mind by any and every man, who would have a right understanding of the book of Ecclesiastes.

The principle was this: that Solomon wrote this book to persuade men, especially young men, to religion, by an argument drawn from his own life. On the ground of that life, he holds up the world before the eye of a young man, simply to have him look at it as it is, in all its forms and promise, and then make up his mind whether it is worth the consideration he gives to it, while for its sake, he continues in his irreligion, and does not *seek first* the favor of God. To show the world in its just light, Solomon, speaks as an old practitioner, and an old observer—a man of feelings and of eyes. And while he adverts so constantly throughout the book to his own experience and observation, as a man who had tried riches, and pomp, and pleasure, and who had lived long enough to see all that the wide-spread shiftings and fluctuations of this world can heave up; he distinguishes three points of his own heart's history:

First, Sometimes he tells what he felt and thought at the period when he was going on in the full tide of worldly enjoyment and hope:

Second, Sometimes he expresses the sentiments he entertained at the period when he had found that the world could not answer his purpose, and found himself heart-sick and disgusted with it all; and *before* he had turned to God, placing his affections and directing his aims upon something better than earth:

Third, Sometimes he expresses the sentiments he entertained *now*: when he had chosen "the fear of God" and "the keeping of his commandments;" and when, as an old hand in the matter, he could tell irreligious young people what the world's offers were good for; and what was the only thing that was worth living for.

The text before us expresses the sentiments he entertained in the second of these periods, which we have denominated the period of disgust. You perceive he speaks of the past—he speaks of himself—he speaks as a man of experience and observation: "I hated life, because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of spirit." You perceive, he saw the world in its true light, so far as it is considered by itself, and *not* considered in its relation to another. He was heart-sick of it all; he even *hated life; i. e.* he was disgusted with it—he saw it useless, and found it distasteful. Things met his eyes which threw a cast of vanity over all human existence; and feelings came up in his heart which made even life itself in such a world as this, a sickening portion, a burden, an empty and distressful dream.—So he felt without religion. So he found life. So he would have all the irreligious feel. So he would assure them that they shall find life, sooner or later, just as surely as they live in the world without God. Sooner or later, (much as they love the world, and eagerly as they pursue it, (they shall half wish, or quite wish, they had never lived at all.

Let us enter into this subject. Let us spread out this lesson. Let us cast our eyes over the whole scene of an irreligious life, and see if anywhere we can discern anything which ought not to make irreligious men sympathize with Solomon in his period of disgust —*I hated life.*

Not to exhaust this subject, but to give some hints of its extent, we name to you six ideas:

1. The confusion and darkness which cover life;
2. The results of a worldly experience;
3. Knowledge of men;
4. Excessive fondness for the world;
5. Failure in worldly endeavors;
6. Failure of even that intellectual excellence which rises above "amusements" and sensuality.

I. It needs no argument to prove that the dispenations of God are often shrouded in impenetrable darkness. But the *depth* of that midnight hovers over the head of an irreligious man. God's promises cast light where nothing else can; and one of the present, and often realized advantages of religion, is to be found in the fact, that the Divine dispensations are all of them confirmatory of the Divine promises, and all illustrative of their significance. There is not a thing so strange, a distress so deep, a night so dark, but the very unacceptableness of the matter brings along with it to the Christian some lesson of profit, as it bears on an immortality to come, or some balm of comfort, as God stands by his people in the furnace of trial. With the wicked, with the worldly it is not so.

They read time by the light of time's own torch, flickering and fitful. They read the world aside from the light cast back upon it from the anticipated fires of its coming conflagration. Hence they cannot read rightly. Time, the world, life, are all misunderstood; and *so* misunderstood by an irreligious man, that he is compelled to be disgusted with life, or else act very much on the proposal of licentiousness, *let us eat and drink for to-morrow we shall die*—(*Is.* xxii. 13.)

How can a man be satisfied here, or be anything better than sickened with life, when at every glance over society, his eyes meet with instances of virtue depressed, and vice prosperous? Where is the equity in this? On what principle is it, that the man who has done most good to society is often least rewarded and least esteemed by society; and the man who has done most evil to his generation shall be the very man upon whom earth confers most of her advantages, and men of the world lavish most of their smiles? The wicked often prosper. The righteous often suffer. Confusion seems to reign over life. As a man looks upon it, his eyes behold strange things; and as he thinks in the days of his youth, of entering upon that capricious scene, wherein awards are distributed, not according to merit, to industry, to worth; how can he avoid being disheartened and disgusted with a life which proposes to him, he knows not what? He has no religion. He cannot think or feel on religious principles. He sees only uncertainty and confusion. On the one hand, he beholds men, whom he is compelled to dispise seated in high places of honor and trust; and on the other hand, he beholds men, whose transactions are detestable, gifted with every desired prosperity. He says to himself "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to the men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill, but time and chance happeneth to them all"—(xi. 11). So he thinks. He knows no better. He sees no farther. And can you wonder that he should be thoroughly heart-sick of a life which he must go and spend amid such a scene of turmoil, confusion, and uncertainty? Is it any wonder, if, disgusted with all that life and the world can offer, he should just let *time and chance* dispose of them as they will? Or if he looks forward to the end, all the end that his now worldly soul cares anything about, how can he avoid dissatisfaction the most perfect disgust with life, while he says, as man "came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to God as he came, and shall take nothing of his labor, which he may carry away in his hand? And this is a sore evil, that in all points, as he came so he shall go; and what profit hath he that hath labored for the wind; All his days also he eateth in darkness and he hath much sorrow and wrath with his sickness."—(v. 15–17.) How can he avoid disgust with life, while his lips, untaught in the

language of Israel, are saying, (ix. 2–5.) "all things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth and to him that sacrificeth not; as is the good so is the sinner, and he that sweareth as he that feareth an oath; this is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all; yea also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead: for to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion: for the living know they shall die; but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward, for the memory of them is forgotten?" As the mind of this irreligious man sweeps over all human life, from the time of man's birth in nakedness, down to the period when time has worn the letters from his tomb-stone, and the *memory of all is alike forgotten;* is it any wonder, if such a life disgusts him? if, sick at heart, he turns away from its darkness, distresses and perishing memory? Life, the world, time, were never designed to be read in their own light simply. They were designed to be read in the full blaze of eternity. A wise man cannot be anything else than dissatisfied with life, while all his ideas linger on things this side the tomb. He may prosper here, he may not. And whether he does or not, he deems a matter of *chance,*—and since all die alike and alike are forgotten, a matter of indifference. He is dissatisfied with the world: he is dissatisfied with God when, he thinks of Him; and dissatisfied with himself whether he considers his experience or contemplates his prospects. "I hated life, because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me."—He should look *beyond* the sun,—beyond the world,—beyond time. His disgust with life cannot be easily cured in any other method. Eternity alone can explain the darkness and disorders of time.

II. After all the earthly bounties of God, and all the provisions He has made to meet the wants, capacities, and tastes of our common humanity; there never yet has been a man who arrived at anything like a full satisfaction. This was one of Solomon's stings of experience. He tried hard to attain contentment. He run the full round of pleasure. He tried wealth. He tried honor. He tried pomp and splendour. He tried science. He tried wine. He was resolved to be happy: "whatever mine eyes desired I kept not from them; I withheld not my heart from any joy, for my heart rejoiced in all my labor, and this was my portion of all my labor" —(ii. 10.) But it all would not do. He tried in vain. His hopes were blasted, and his heart saddened and sickened by the very profusion in which he sought satisfaction. And then he sums up the matter in a method most instructive to a votary of the world: "I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on all

the labour that I had laboured to do, and behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun"—(ii. 11.) "I hated life."—The difference between Solomon and our worldlings is this: *He* succeeded; most of our worldlings fail! He was disgusted by success; most of our worldlings are disgusted by failure! His disgust with life bore off his mind towards the *life that is to come;* THEIR disgust, confined to experienced things, and not calling their thoughts to things hoped for, only fastens their minds more fixedly on the *life that now is.* But it will all be in vain. They cannot compel the world to satisfy them. They will be as much disgusted when the next year is closing upon them as they are now, when the last sands of this are falling, and when their hearts are so far from satisfaction. No matter what a worldly man attains, it does not answer his purpose. It disappoints him. It cheats him. It cheats him just as much in successes as in failures, "neither is his eye satisfied with riches"—(iv. 8.) And it is a thousand wonders, that he does not become more disgusted with life than he is, and sooner disgusted. It is a thousand wonders that he does not *perceive* that his dissatisfaction springs, not from the limitation of his successes, but from the very nature of the objects he pursues. Such objects never can satisfy him. Give him anything and he will crave more. And if he would only stop now, and take one sober thought about the ashes, the phantom, the dream he is persuing, he could not avoid being disgusted with a life distressfully expended on such vanities. Every unbeliever in the world would be disgusted with life, if he would only notice the emptiness of that for which he is spending it. He is doomed —*no,* he dooms *himself,* to walk in a valley of trouble. Its end is as dark as its portion is troublesome; and it is no wonder that as long as he is an irreligious man his most sober and deep thought compels him to wish, or half wish, that he had never lived at all! —There is but one rock of repose for an immortal soul,—and *that rock is Christ.*

III. The same, or a worse species of dissatisfaction with life may very well result from what is often experienced amid once valued and sought intimacies and attachments.—Let us do the melancholy justice. Let us not attribute all their downcast feelings to a dark and gloomy disposition, nor to the east wind that has shattered their nerves. Where is the man, whose heart has not saddened at the recollection of professions once made to him? Who is there that has not found occasion to exclaim, what a world! —what friendships!—what friends! How soon their affections cool! How readily they fly from me in trouble! They could love me in prosperity, but they forsake me in adversity! Perfidious wretches! They could bask in the sunshine of my favour, when my favour was good for anything for them: they could desert me in trouble,

unshamed at their perfidy and their mean selfishness! "Two are better than one; for if they fall one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to help him up"—(iv. 10.) Such laments do not all come from a disordered fancy, from unstrung nerves, or from a melancholy disposition. They come sometimes from the realities of distressful experience; and that distress strikes so deep and so disgustfully upon the heart, (not now to say so common), that there is little ground to wonder, if life itself, to be spent among such sunshine friends, becomes a matter of disgust:—"I hated life." If you cannot realize it, I can only say, the realization is yet in store for you. You have but one way of avoiding it. You must have a *friend that sticketh closer than a brother*, to whom you may flee in every time of trouble, and with whose spirit you must be so deeply imbued, that, instead of hating the treacherous that pierce you, you shall pity them, and pray, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."—It is very common that an unbeliever's own companions make him hate life itself.

IV. There are instances in which this detestation of life results in its strongest measure from an excessive valuation of what one proposes to gain from the world, while life lasts. As ministers of the gospel, we have something to do sometimes with this strange aspect of human nature. Let us tell you a secret: the most extravagant *fondness* for the world which we are ever called to notice and compelled to deplore, is indicted to us in the language of laments and dissatisfaction. Our acquaintance is unbosoming himself to us. He tells how he feels. He says, I detest the world; I despise it; I could wish to be dissolved from it; it has done me injustice; life in such a world is little more than a burden!—How is this? Does this complainer realize the world's emptiness? Has he risen superior to its charms? No such thing. Its charms are as dear to him as ever. He is heart-sick; but does not half know what makes him so. Its charms have escaped him; and his contempt of the world just springs from that fact. He had an excessive love for it, and his lamentations *now*, are just in proportion to his fondness once, aye, his fondness still. He is not sorry for sin; he is only sorry his sin cannot find the means of indulgence. He is not about to repent; he is only taking revenge upon a world that has cheated him, by calling it hard names, and pouring contempt upon it. Take a little leaf of his heart's biography: I write it in this way: He commenced life in raptures with the world: his heart bounded to its embraces: he did not imagine that friends would be treacherous, fortune capricious, hopes vanishing, riches have wings, and the blood of youth and health soon circulate pain through his bones instead of pleasure. But his dream of fancy was soon broken. Its gilded spell gave place

to a hated reality. And now he is disgusted with life in such a world as this, just in the very proportion as he loved and loves still, the things beyond his reach: he hates life just as much as he loves the world; and he rails at the world simply because it eludes him.—That is a leaf of his heart. He does not own it; he does not believe it simply because he does not know himself, because his *heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.* His disgust with life is just the result of an excessive worldliness. It does not result from the serious reflections which an immortal soul ought to have—reflections controlled by the contrast between *the life that now is and that which is to come.*

V. A disrelish for life often springs from the cutting contemplation of the end of all man's endeavors, (ii. 11.) One does not like to labour in vain. It is disheartening to expend much toil for little good; and it becomes the more so, when the good falls nowhere, either to the man himself, or those who come after him. If there could be any fixed certainty, that beneficial results shall come *somewhere*, and that, though the laborer does not reach them himself, yet his labor shall bless his successors; the recollection of this might bring some solace to weary minds and weary muscles; pride, if not benevolence, might then extend its regards onwards beyond life, and as far as the results of present exertion shall reach —and the man might value life on much the same principle as some men put value on the tomb-stone, that shall tell where they lie—it gives their earthly existence a kind of extension

But behold the reality. Even worldly men are often compelled to see it. There *is no* certainty; none that is solacing. Toil and labor must be expended very much in vain. At least the wicked think so, whenever they really think at all. Solomon thought so. Hear him. He asks (ii. 23)—"For what hath man of all his labor and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath labored under the sun? for all his days are sorrow, and his travail grief, yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity. (ii. 11). Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do; and behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun." So much for the present.— And what in the future? The future is no better. "There is no remembrance of the wise man more than of the fool forever, seeing that which now is, in the days to come shall all be forgotten. And how dieth the wise man? as the fool. Therefore I hated life."—And the future is no better when contemplated in respect to those who shall take the fruits of our labor—"Yea, I hated all my labor which I had taken under the sun; because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me; and who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? Yet shall he have rule over all my labor wherein I have labored,

and wherein I have showed myself wise under the sun. This also is vanity, (ii. 18, 19). Fools may take our possessions. Fools may be our heirs. All our labor, instead of profiting them, may only be a curse to them. Rehoboams may inherit the crowns of our Solomons! and personal dissipation, and divided and ruined kingdoms, may be the fruits of all our earthly successes! Who then, can blame a disgust with life? If this is all, who ought *not* to be disgusted? Oh, that man would see it! certainly we do not live here for life's sake! most certainly, the world's history, almost every heart's history, is made by God himself, as a bold lesson to turn man's eyes towards the life to come, as could be written by the sunbeams on the ashes of a burnt world!—There is only one thing which never cheats endeavor, and never cheats hearts.

VI. But Solomon tried other resources. He was a man of science. Seldom, if ever, hath he been equalled. The wisdom embodied in his Book of Proverbs is unparalleled. Not to speak how of its religion, it is unequalled in its wisdom in reference to the common principles and economy of life. You have been taught how he coined those proverbs. To make a single one of them demanded great labor—extensive and acute observation. His mind examined and weighed everything connected with the subject; and having attained its knowledge and formed its judgments and made its discriminations, it condensed the whole matter in one short proverb, the embodied wisdom of a world of thought. There never was such a man. He studied everything. He says, "I turned myself to behold wisdom" (ii. 12). "I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven" (i. 13). He applied himself to the sciences and he expresses the superiority of his opportunities and means, by the question, (ii. 12)—"What can the man do that cometh after the king?" i. e., who can have such advantages for science as royalty furnished him? And he improved them. In the first Book of the Kings, fourth chapter and thirtieth verse, it is said—"Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt, for he was wiser than all men." The twelfth verse of the third chapter of that Book, tells us what God himself said to him—Lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee." The thirty-second and thirty-third verses of the fourth chapter furnish us a catalogue of some of the subjects on which he composed treatises, part of which are lost to the world—"He spoke three thousand proverbs, and his songs were one thousand and five. He spake of trees, from the ceder-tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall; he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things and of fishes." A moralist, a poet, a philosopher, a

historian, a botanist, a master in the natural history of beasts and birds and fishes and creeping things: there is no danger of extravagance in affirming, that his extent of science has seldom or never been equalled. He *gave his heart* to it, as he says; and he signally succeeded.

If, therefore, there was ever, a man, or ever will be one, qualified by the knowledge and experience of the matter to estimate literature and science justly; that man was Solomon. And what does he say? Does he deem all this worth living for? Does it give him a relish for life, any more than his pleasure, "I said of laughter it is mad, and of mirth what doeth it?" or any more than his labors and his possessions, which might fall into the hands of a *fool*? Not at all. Take his own testimony. He does, indeed, in one sentence, express a preference for knowledge. He says—"A wise man's eyes are in his head;" i. e. a man of knowledge is not blind, while a fool "walketh in darkness." But after all, the whole array of his literature and science could not hinder his disgust of life, or make him feel it was worth living for. Read the eighth verse of the first chapter—"All things are full of labor; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing:" science cost him more labor than it furnished him satisfaction: it could not fill an immortal soul. Read the eighteenth verse—"But in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth in knowledge, increaseth in sorrow." How is *this*? How so? Why, it comes in a hundred ways: one is, that the point of satisfaction is never reached, not only, but is pushed further off, and appears more inaccessible, as knowledge increases, "that which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out?" (vii. 24): this is an affliction. Another is, that as knowledge increases, you will see more and more to deplore in the world, and more and more to detest in its inhabitants. As your skill unmasks selfishness, and sees through the disguises of insincerity; and as you find the very man who has a smile for your presence, will have a sneer for you in your absence; you will have less bliss, than when you had more ignorance; you will be disgusted with men, and blush to think that you belong to the race. Another way is, that your increasing knowledge will [illegible] from it. You have laboriously [illegible] the world will not [illegible] with a scepticism, [illegible] whose scepticism is his only [illegible] into the [illegible] you have laboriously [illegible] Another way is, that knowledge will [illegible] Vanity [illegible] knowledge can [illegible] in one word, when you have explored [illegible] of all earthly

science, and gratified your zeal for knowledge in all that is knowable among men; you will be compelled to an *increase of sorrow*, because all this comes no nearer to satisfy your immortal soul, than did the ignorance in which you began. You will say, like Solomon —"As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me; and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart, that this also is vanity" (ii. 15).—Considered in view of eternity, the longest periods of time are no more than the shortest; and measured by the wants of an immortal soul the most extensive science hath no more sufficiency than ignorance and stupidity. And if you could try it all, and on the ground of your experience should desire to leave your advice as a legacy to your son; you would just copy the twelfth verse of the twelfth chapter of this Book—"By these, my son, be admonished, of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness to the flesh." "Therefore I hated life because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me, for all is vanity and vexation of spirit." Disgust with life, when life is spent for any mere earthly purposes, will be an inevitable result of all sober thinking. Men cannot avoid it, but by avoiding thought, by shutting their eyes, by drowning their senses in the intoxication of thoughtless merriment, or gilded and baseless hopes.

It were easy to add to these items. Let these suffice.

But we cannot close without some other ideas, some lessons by way of inference.

1. Man was made for religion. He must have been. If not, he was made by an enemy, made for *vanity and vexation of spirit*. His life, and all he can gain as he spends it, will sooner or later become matter of disgust, contempt and sickening; just as surely as he lives and must die, if he does *not* live for immortality, and die to inherit it. If an immortal life is not within his reach; his life is itself a dark riddle, his world a riddle, his heart and conscience and hopes are only curses to him, all cheats; and it matters scarcely a song, whether he dies this year or the next, or lives a century! If he will not live for immortality, he will soon hate life, and soon wish he had never lived at all! He was made to "fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole of man."

2. The felicities of the irreligious in this life, all depend upon lack of thought, and the power of deception. They cheat themselves: the world cheats them; their hopes, their aims, all cheat them! They are not what they think, and the world is not what they think it. Life, spent as they are spending it, will do them no good. How mournful, to see young people, (while life is on the wing, and its years one after another are rushing by,) spending their hours, their hopes, their energies, in a way not only to do them no good; but in a way which if not speedily abandoned, will

force them to curse the day in which *they were born!* Let me tell you, my young hearers, your life was not given for this world's purposes; and if you spend it for them, you will spend it very much in vain. Your souls, your immortal souls cannot be satisfied as you hope. You need what the world cannot give. The sooner you are convinced of it the better. You need the favor of God. You need the blood of atonement, and the sustaining grace of the Holy Spirit. As you pass on in life, your hopes will be often disappointed, your world will become a blank to you, and your life a burden! What gives you most happiness will soon give you most pain: what now multiplies your joys will soon multiply and embitter your sorrows; for death will cut down your friends around you! It will make the world a solitude, and life itself a distress. As you part with them, as you bear away their bones to the land of silence, your hearts will sink within you: and how will you bear the superadded distress of the thought, that your impiety embittered the dying hours of the friend, the father, the mother you will see no more? Oh, if you but had then that sweet hope that you should see them in heaven, how it would blunt the sting that enters into your soul! how it would make you realize that life is something more than a sickening scene, and death something else than an eternal separation.

Therefore,

3. How greatly desirable is early piety. This was one of the conclusions which Solomon drew form his varied experience and extensive observation. He had tried the world. He well knew its worth. He had tried religion too; and having felt how strong an enforcement for religion could be gathered from all that the world contains; in this Book, his mind takes a truly philosophical sweep over the whole range of an earthly existence, and then comes to the conslusions which such a view could not avoid. Early piety is one of these conclusions—"*Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.*" Notice how he arrives at this conclusion. Both observation and experience help him to it. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity," is an expression containing the condensation of all that he felt and knew about the world. *I hated life*, is a description of one of his bitter experiences, after he had tried to force the world to make him happy. He wished to save young people from the toilsome and tearful career that he had himself run, while seeking his happiness in luxury and splendor, and "amusements," in songs and science, and *whatsoever his heart desired under the sun.* He holds up before them the whole world as it is, when taken as a portion, *vanity, vanity, vanity*, written in letters of fire all over its splendor and pomp and merriment and, even science. He opens to them his heart, his own heart, torn with *vexation*, and sick of life, even, while its fondness hung round things *under the sun.*

They may glance at the picture, and then at the heart; and having done so, may take their choice, whether they will spend their earliest and best days for such *vanity*, only to give such *vexation*. But if they will hear him, an old practitioner, an old observer, he tells them in the twelfth chapter, the sentiments which he now entertains, burnt into his heart by the bitterness of an experience from which he would dissuade *them*. "Remember NOW thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; while the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened; nor the clouds return after the rain. In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders shall cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows shall be darkened, And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low; and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird; and all the daughters of music shall be brought low; also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail; because man goeth to his long home; and the mourners go about the streets; or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel be broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." What is it all? all the world? all life; *Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, all is vanity. I hated life.* And shall the young run the same round? shall they lend their minds to the same dream, and their hearts to the same sickening? Shall their best energies be expended in vain? Will they not *believe*, without the bitterness of a trial, that the world cannot answer their purpose? Will they not believe philosophy, gathering up all the worth of the world, and labelling it all, *vanity?* Will they disbelieve history, biography, experience, the grave and God,—all which urge them to the *conclusion of the whole matter, that, to fear God and keep his commandments is the whole of man?* (xii. 13). But, by and bye, (if they should live), their best days spent, old, worn out, and good for nothing, their bones shaken at the grave's mouth; will they then first begin to think, that *God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil?* (xii. 14).—Early piety would save them from a world of vexation. Nothing *but* early piety can save many of them from hell. Few of them will live to be old.

My young friends: living in such a world, and hasting to such a tribunal, does thoughtlessness or merriment become you? Must you live to be "amused," and then die to be lost? Remember, you must have a meeting with God! Hide, you cannot! Shrink, you

cannot! You must stand *there*, where the throne blazes, and endless ruin or eternal bliss begins! Despair, perdition, are unnecessary. God *waits to be gracious*. He calls you to Christ. He offers you heaven. You may be saved, if you will. But let me tell you, He will soon take back His offers of fatherly and gracious kindness and love. That *throne of grace* on which He sits, shall soon be taken down, and He will rear on the spot His throne of judgment! "*Every man's* work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is." (1 Cor. iii. 13). "For behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that burn them up, that it shall leave neither root nor branch." (Mal. iv. 1). If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? (1 Peter iv. 18). In view of that dreadful day and all its results—*now*, before you hate life, make your choice betwixt vanity and heaven—truth and falsehood—sin and holiness—the eternal friendship and eternal enmity of God! But, oh! choose wisely, and live for ever.

If you will not choose so, reflect.

4. How strong is the power of sin over the human heart! Men will spend their lives in the very way to make life itself a distress. They will live for the world in a way to poison life's good, and force from their own lips the bitter confession, "I hate life, because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me, all is vanity and vexation of spirit." It need not be. This life, as an introduction into heaven, may be joy in God, and the triumph of hope over gloom, dissatisfaction, and anguish.

5. Finally, this discussion ought to be a lession to us on the matter of a worldly prosperity. One of the most amiable sins (if I may speak so), certainly one on the most excusable, (if, again, I may speak so), is the anxiety of parents for the prosperity of their children. But amid that desired prosperity, their very children may *yet hate life*. Let us not expend our affections unwisely. Let us be more anxious, that our children shall be disgusted with a life spent for the world, than that they shall be satisfied with it. Let us be more desirous that they shall be happy in heaven, than prosperous on earth. Let us consult for them, not merely as formed for this world, but as accountable, immortal beings, formed for eternity. If we live to the next Lord's day, let us come to the Lord's table with prayer for them; that our life and our death may not be embittered with the thought of their impiety. If the God of mercy will hear our prayers, and bring them yet to that table with us, we will no longer say—"I hate life"—we will exclaim, Lord, "Now lettest thou thy servants depart in piece, for our eyes have seen thy salvation."—God grant it. Amen.

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THE RICHEST TREASURE.*

"More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold."—Psalms 19: 10.

When, half a century ago, the first settlers of Western New York were about leaving their home in New England for what was then a wilderness, the entire village, we are told, assembled with them at the house of God, where together they had so often worshipped. There, by the minister of Christ, they were addressed on the subject of their expedition—were commended to heaven by prayer, and then, amid weeping and sadness, took their mournful farewell—no more, as they supposed, again to meet their friends on earth. They went forth somewhat as the first settlers of New England went when leaving the shores beyond the Atlantic, with no thought of ever returning. And going with these feelings, no wonder they turned their thoughts to the religious themes suggested by the separations of *life* as of *death*, and desired to be commended to Him, without whose care no one is ever safe.

A feeling kindred to theirs doubtless originated the interesting and salutary custom which prevails here, and at other whaling ports, of preaching on board the vessel that is soon to go forth with those who follow their calling on the waves—counseling her crew from the oracles of God, and commending them to Him who rules alike on the land and on the deep. And surely the same course is most appropriate in the circumstances that assemble us this morning; assemble us in the house of God, when, but for the severity of the season, we might be gathered on the departing ship. These circumstances need no explanation. Multitudes, as we all know,

* A discourse preached to a company of California emigrants, and eminently adapted to the signs of the times.—*Ed.*

are going forth from every port of our land: all eager and joyous with hope; all, *desiring*—most, *expecting* wealth; all, now in health; most, looking forward to the time when they shall return again, with competence, if not with riches; some, intending to settle in their new abode, and planning for business, and dreaming of prosperity and happiness there.

But of all these, numbers—great numbers, will beyond question be disappointed. Though with confidence they may

> "Map their future, like some unknown coast,
> And say, here is a harbor—there a rock—
> The one we will attain—the other shun;
> *They will do neither!*"

Some, doubtless, will have sunk to their last sleep, and their bodies be committed to the ocean—registered for the voyage to a distant shore, they will have made the voyage to eternity—long before the vessel in which they started will have reached its intended port! Some will be the victims of the sickness, and sorrow, and suffering, which are watching in ambush all along the pathway of the future; and some, instead of gathering riches from the desert, will leave their bones to bleach and whiten its sands! And even of those who are spared and in safety reach the end of their course, multitudes will fall short of their expectations. They will find the *gold* of the future, like its *happiness*, a thing that flies as they advance; and while the few, as in the lottery, succeed perhaps abundantly, the great mass will never grasp their anticipated prosperity. The history of extensive emigration has almost ever been the history of benefit to the country in the end, but of hardship, privation, disappointment, suffering to individuals, at the outset and in their progress: and there is no reason why the immense emigration now going forth from every part of our land should be an exception, while there is danger that an emigration for gold, unlicensed, anti-social, irregular as in many respects it must be, will be preceded with peculiar evils. With all these possibilities, probabilities, then gathering about it, well does it become those who [illegible] to go with the [illegible]; and as they go, to [illegible] God, by his word may speak unto them. If the [illegible], knowing as we [illegible], would not go out to battle [illegible] the issues of the spiritual, much more [illegible] who are going on [illegible] adventure, may be to the [illegible] go, for [illegible] God.

[illegible] to us [illegible] of its [illegible] and [illegible] declares, "More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold." Two things [illegible] suggested for your consideration:

1. The *implied* truth, that gold is valuable; and, 2. The *expressed* truth, that the teachings of God's Word and conformity to them, are of infinitely greater value.

I. *The text implies that* GOLD IS VALUABLE, AND OF COURSE DESIRABLE. But on this point, it may be said it is needless to dwell since all the world by their actions, their constant and eager pursuit, show they are fully, alas! but too fully, satisfied of this value; and why, it may be asked, why dwell upon even a *truth* that may be perverted to madden the fever already burning like fire? Because, I reply, the world very often pursues that which is *not* valuable, or seeks that which *has* value for wrong reasons, and from wrong motives; and every object should be seen in its true light. We have heard, too, one of the most distinguished statesmen of the present age, ignorantly misquoting the Scriptures, and saying in the halls of the nation, that "*money* was the root of all evil!" And in common life, large and universal as is the pursuit of wealth, we often hear the intimation, that the desire for it implies contractedness, meanness, littleness of thought, and spirit. Prose has exhausted its epithets, and poetry its figures, argument its logic, and rhetoric its tropes, to pour contempt on the pursuit of riches —a pursuit in which those most prompt to sneer at it, are often most ready to engage.

The Bible, however, places wealth on the same footing with every other temporary good—to be regarded in the same manner, esteemed for the same reasons, sought in the same spirit, and used for the same end. Its very first mention of gold is in connection with the garden of Eden, and its last with the New Jerusalem—the heavenly city. It compares the trial and purified Christian to gold from the furnace; it informs us that God gave riches to Solomon as a mark of his favor; it describes the Son of Man, when appearing in his glory, as having on his head a golden crown. Its doctrine is, that *property*, like health, intellect, knowledge, influence, character, *is a talent*, entrusted by God, and to be used and accounted for to Him. It is like *food*, which, properly eaten, contributes to health, but improperly and excessively, brings on surfeiting, fever, death. It is like *water*, which, kept without the ship, aids her to float on to her desired haven: but allowed to enter and fill that ship, is her ruin. Held with a right spirit, and used to right ends, it is like the *air* when moving in the healthful breeze, the minister of comfort, enjoyment, life; held with a wrong spirit, and used to wrong ends, it is like the same air when tainted with the pestilence, or swept by the tornado, the medium of injury and death.

It is not *gold*, but the *love*, that is, the *excessive, supreme love* of gold, which the Bible teaches is "*the root of all evil*"—which it declares is "*idolatry*." The patriarch does not say, "If I have *possessed* gold," but, "If I have made gold *my hope*, or said to

the fine gold, thou art *my confidence*, *this* were an iniquity." The Saviour does not exclaim, "How hardly shall they that *have* riches," but as his own explanation is, "How hard is it for them that *trust* in riches, to enter into the kingdom of God!" Sought as a means to an end, like every other means, wealth is valuable for a thousand things: sought merely as an end, it becomes a curse. Properly used, it is a good: abused, it is an evil. In the one case, it is "the load-stone to draw men nearer to God;" in the other, "the mill-stone, to sink them to perdition." To *possess* gold, other things being equal, is a blessing. To *be* possessed by it, and by the love of it, is to be possessed by a devil, and one of the basest and worst kind of devils. Gold in the *hand* is well, if it do not get into the *heart:* though, alas! it often gets into the latter, when not in the former. The great distinction which Christ makes is, on the one hand, "laying up treasure for self," that is, in the selfish spirit and for selfish ends, and on the other, "being rich toward God," that is, holding our property as his stewards, and ever being ready to use it for Him. Everywhere the Bible inculcates those virtues, honesty, industry, forethought, prudence, &c., which *tend* to wealth, and it equally and everywhere enjoins, that whatever wealth we possess, we hold at God's disposal, and use as He directs.

Sneer though some may at gold-digging, there are gold-diggers here, all about us, in the shop, and the counting-house, and the office, in the crowded city, or the quiet village, as well as on our distant coasts. And the one class is not necessarily more inclined to mammon-worship than the other. To either, the pursuit is lawful and proper if properly followed. Morally, and in itself considered, gold-hunting on the land is as proper as whale-hunting on the deep, or wealth-hunting in the ways of business. It may not be as *wise;* and we may, if we choose, question the *judgment* of those who engage in it: though it is difficult, if not impossible, for those who are settled in regular and prosperous business, fully to appreciate the position and feelings of the many enterprising young men in our land, who, finding the various avenues of business crowded to overflowing, gladly go forth to a new and unoccupied field of effort and hoped-for success. But whether the emigration be wise or unwise, and *that*, each must decide for himself, yet *morally*, whether here or there, the pursuit is, in its nature, the same—the same to the lawyer in his office, the mechanic in his work-shop, the merchant in his counting-house, or the sand-sifter on the banks of the modern Pactolus.

In either case, it is the *end* proposed, the *motive* that influences, the *inward feeling*, by which we are to judge of the *outward act.* "*Why* does each seek for wealth?" This is the all-important question. Is it for God or self? Is it to be used, first, as it was intended by Heaven, to supply our own wants, and the wants of *those dependent* on us, and next, in benevolence to others? Or

is it sought only for self-indulgence, to enable its possessor to live in idleness or luxury, or to gain worldly honor and influence and respect? Is it to do good, as becomes the Christian, or to be able to say, "Soul, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry?" According to the answer, in each case, must be the decision. If wealth be sought with the one class of motives and feelings, whether here or there, the individual is in the way of sin; and if with the other, whether here or there, he is in the way of duty. Place does not create a difference. California is as near to heaven, and alas! as near to hell too, as our own beloved New England! And there as here, gold, if sought with a right spirit, and to be used for right ends, if of value—the means to a thousand important ends—the channel of multiplied blessings—the minister of food, raiment, comfort, intelligence—an agent of power for doing good, spreading happiness, sustaining the cause of benevolence, sending the gospel and the missionary to the ends of the earth. Our subject, then, does not say, as some would do, "Beware of gold," or "Beware of going in search of it," but it does say, with the Saviour, "Beware of covetousness;" and the very spirit and essence of covetousness it finds in the supreme and selfish love, and the selfish possession and use of property—in "laying up treasure for self," and not being "rich toward God!"

But valuable as wealth is, when rightly sought and used, our text points us to what it declares of infinitely greater value, namely,

II. *To the* PRINCIPLES AND TEACHINGS OF GOD'S WORD. Of these it expressly proclaims, "More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold." And they are so,

1. *Because, so far as wealth is valuable, the Bible inculcates the principles and virtues that aid to secure it.* As it is true of the New Testament, that though it nowhere enjoins any specific form of civil government, yet the *tendency* of all its great principles is to human freedom, so that tyrants fear and hate it, so it is as to the subject before us. Nowhere does the Bible point out localities of gold, or silver, or precious stones; but it does inculcate the virtues that tend to prosperity, and denounce the vices that lead to poverty. From the very insects beneath our feet, it draws the lessons of diligence and labor. It declares that the sluggard is "as vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes." It warns the idler, who will not plough in the winter, that he shall be left to beggary in the harvest. It enjoins, and all its great principles lead, to that industry, honesty, enterprise, good judgment, and good faith; that method, accuracy, promptness; that devotion to business and not to pleasure; that knowledge of man, and that quick discernment of truth and falsehood; that wise adjustment of plans, and their diligent and energetic prosecution; that proportioned and discreet good sense, that knows where to stop, as well as where to begin; all of which tend to prosperity and wealth. Even

for this world, it is, as the general rule, found true, that "in keeping God's commandments, there is great reward."

And so, on the other hand, the Bible forbids those vices that prevent the acquisition of wealth, or that waste it when required.

Set a man down—his voyage over—in the midst of the richest gold regions of the earth, and let him yield to certain kinds of temptation, and in the midst of all the wealth around him, he will still be poor. Let him, for example, abandon himself to *intoxication*—for mournful as is the fact, there are those so lost to every spark of principle and humanity—poisoners of men and panders to devils—as to be sending out intoxicating drinks with the tide of emigration—let him yield to the temptation thus set before him, and he will soon be unfitted for picking up the very gold that may abound at his feet, and most admirably fitted for quickly losing, even if he has found it. His brains being gone from his head, the gold from his pocket will speedily follow; be stolen away when he knows it not, or wheedled away in foolish bargains, by villains more sober, but less principled than himself, or recklessly squandered in guilty, sottish indulgence. Let the individual, again, give way to the excitements of *gambling*, a vice which the Bible forbids as well as intemperance, and a few short hours may dissipate the wealth that weeks, or months, or years may have gathered. And the same general remark may be made of the *observance of the Sabbath:* for it is only where the Sabbath is kept, that the *morality* of the Sabbath is found; and where it is habitually violated, there insults, robberies, drunkenness, gambling, violence, and a lawless and murderous state of life and manners, will soon abound; and on the Pacific coast, as here, there is no safety for the man, either as to property or success, who will trample on God's holy day. Such an one has deliberately "forsaken the Most High, and entered on the devil's ground, and is tempting the destroyer to tempt and destroy him," and provoking God to curse him for time and eternity. In all these and many other things, it needs but little reflection to satisfy us, that whether directly to the individual, or indirectly to him through the community where he dwells, "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is," as well as "of that which is to come." Of the great principles of God's Word, faithfully carried out in practice, even the gold-seeker, if thoughtful and candid, will be constrained to say, that, as tending to permanent prosperity, "More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold."

This is further true of the great principles of the Bible, because

2. *They give directly the very blessings that men seek to obtain indirectly by the possession of wealth.* No one but the *miser* (*miserable* in etymology and fact) seeks gold for its own sake. He, with insane and consummate folly, may live for wealth as *in itself an end, robbing* himself that he may save his gold, for it "throw-

ing up his interest in *both* worlds—first *starved* in this, then *damned* in that to come!" But every one who has the sanity of common sense, seeks it only as a means to some end; and that end is happiness, or what the individual thinks will afford it. One foolishly supposes that inactivity and rest are synonymous with happiness; and seeks wealth, that when he obtains it, he may have nothing to do but to vegetate in idleness. Another fancies it will be found in the indulgence of appetite, and another, in splendid living, another in influence over his fellow-men, and still another, in being known and talked of, and perhaps envied as the possessor of large estates; and each desires and toils for wealth as the means of attaining his favorite form of happiness.

Now, even if in all these cases, happiness were to be found in the things supposed, it is still true that *two* steps are requisite to reach it, and the first a step it may need years, or even a life-time to take, while the Bible offers either the same or a higher form of happiness to a single step, and that one which may be taken in a moment. Is wealth desired as affording peace within, or freedom from annoyance and vexation without? "Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them." Is it sought as conducive to dignity and exaltation? "Exalt" wisdom, "and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honor when thou dost embrace her;" and "if any man," says Christ, "serve me, him will my Father honor." Is it followed as a means of procuring pleasure? Religion's ways "are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Is it wished as a provision for future necessities, or a security against future want? "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Is it longed for as giving freedom from toil, anxiety, and care? "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" "Rest from the vexations and labors and cares of the world, rest in the arms of infinite love, rest eternal in the paradise of God!" And all these blessings we have but to ask, that we may receive; while the wealth of this world, if ever so eagerly sought, is uncertain of attainment, and if attained, never, *never* gives the happiness that was expected from it, while the offers of religion are always present and available offers, and in every case the blessedness she gives is satisfying and sure. Tested, then, by the *end* which men propose to themselves in seeking wealth, the Bible and the faith and salvation it offers, are "More to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold."

This will further appear, if we consider,

3. *That the principles of the Bible, and only those principles, can make the possession of wealth a blessing.* Give a man gold, all that his largest desires could wish, and yet let his principles be wrong, his *temper ungoverned*, his appetites and passions uncon-

trolled, his conscience at war (as the sinner's conscience forever is) with his reason and better judgment, and his wealth will but minister to his unhappiness. Instead of being like the fire when kept in its proper place, a source of warmth, utility, and comfort, it will be like the same fire bursting forth, and kindling on, and wrapping the dwelling in flames, acting only to burn and destroy. Hoarding his riches, or using them only for self, not keeping them bright by good and holy uses, he will find that even in this world, "his gold and silver are cankered, and the *rust* (ah! the *rust!*) of them is a swift witness against him, to eat his flesh as if it were fire!" Selfishly and sinfully *breaking the bond that should unite riches with benevolence, and wealth with usefulness*, he has broken the bond between himself and happiness. Taking his treasures, like the prodigal, into the far-off and forbidden country of self-indulgence, away from his father's house and the sympathies of suffering humanity, he shall find they are but husks to his soul, and be a stranger to abiding happiness, till like the prodigal he resolves, "I will arise and go to my father!"

To the one, on the other hand, whose principles are right, whose temper is governed, whose appetites and passions are controlled, whose conscience is at peace with himself and God, whose life is benevolent, that is, to the real Christian—wealth, like any other gift of God, is a blessing. Such an one, through grace, has discovered that the true value of wealth consists in its proper use. He has found out the divine secret, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." He keeps his gold from rust, and his silver from canker by constant and holy use. Possessing it in a benevolent spirit, and using it to benevolent ends, he so improves the mammon of unrighteousness, as not only to make sure of God's favor for eternity, but to enjoy to the full all the happiness it *can* afford here on earth. For their influence, then, in making wealth, where possessed, a blessing even for this world, the principles of the Bible are "More to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold."—Omitting, for want of time, several other thoughts that might illustrate and impress the lesson of the text, I remark, but once more,

4. *That without the principles of the Bible, wealth is in vain, and in the end worse than in vain to the soul.* Centuries ago it was asked, and the question is one of fearful meaning, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul; or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Grant that the world could be gained, though well do we know it cannot, for at most we can pick up but a few of the sand-grains that compose it—grant that even the whole world could be gained, in a little while it will all be as nothing, and less than nothing, without God's favor and preparation for heaven. It will require but little to purchase the *grave* where we must soon sleep. It will be no comfort to the departing spirit to leave a little more by that

grave than is left by others. And if the universe were ours, as we pass to eternity, it could not blot out one single sin, or purchase God's favor, or bribe an entrance to eternal life. On the other hand, if misimproved, it would be the very ground of our condemnation, sinking us to the doom of him who asked, and asked in vain, in perdition, for a drop of water to cool his tongue!—Beware, then, of thinking too much of wealth. Seek it, if you will, as God's providence may permit, in the exercise of the virtues He enjoins, and for the ends His Word proposes; but see to it, that you seek *first* his kingdom and the righteousness thereof. Send forward your thoughts to the end of life, and follow after riches, only with the feelings, motives, and aims that you can approve then. However you may *possess* gold, see to it that it *does not possess you.* Beware, I charge you in Christ's name, beware lest you so desire, or seek, or use wealth, that the footing up of the balance-sheet of your life shall read, "*Gained my wealth, but forfeited God's favor; saved my riches, but lost my soul!*"

In view of the subject we have been considering, we are admonished in closing,

1. *To beware of a covetous spirit.*—The proper pursuit of wealth, as we have seen, is not only permitted but encouraged by God, as developing the character, cultivating the virtues, and giving us the very discipline that we need in probation and for eternity. But, on the other hand, of all astringents, covetousness is the strongest: of all vices, the meanest. More than all others, it degrades the character, and belittles and debases the entire soul. It is the blight of every generous and manly and kindly feeling; the root of all evil; the object of some of the fiercest woes denounced in the Word of God. It violates the entire moral law, for it is the love of self at the expense of both God and our neighbor. It destroyed Ananias and Sapphira; cast down Balaam from the glory of the prophets, and sent Judas from the apostleship to perdition. Many it makes careful and troubled about other things, so that they neglect the one thing needful; and sends them away, sorrowful, from the Saviour, because they will not give up the world for him. Too often, alas! it divides even the professed disciple's heart, so that while he prays, "Thy kingdom come," his *gifts* do not keep pace with his prayers. More than all things does it tend to bind us to the world, generating envy, discontent, and the feverish anxiety of possession; leading if not to disgraceful, yet too often to that decent selfishness which may ruin the soul. "The love of money," says another, "will, it is to be feared, prove the eternal overthrow of more professors of religion, than any other sin, because it is almost the only one that can be indulged while a profession of religion is sustained." Many there are that "*did* run well for a season," but like Bunyan's professed pilgrims, Mr. Grasp-the-world, Mr. Money-love, and Mr. Save-all (names that may well stand *for living realities*), they have turned aside, at the call

of Demas to look at the mine of silver; and like them, they have either fallen over the brink, or gone down to dig, or have been smothered by the damps of the place, but whichever it may be, *they are no more seen in the pilgrim's path!*

And as deep as is the *guilt* of the covetous, so dark will be their *doom* hereafter. The day is near—it is speeding as on the lightning's wing—when, if covetous, your riches shall be corrupted, and your gold and silver cankered, and their rust shall be a swift witness against you. At the bar of judgment, your excuses shall be swept away. Having made gold your hope you shall be left to despair. Having laid up treasures only for self, God shall class you with the fool. Your riches shall testify to your folly, and the heavens shall reveal your iniquity, and the earth rise up against you, and hell open to receive you, and there, with the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, you shall lament for ever, that your very prosperity you have made your ruin!

Beware then, of the spirit of covetousness, in whatever form it may appear. Prevent or cure it, by cherishing its opposite. Expand the soul with benevolence, and it cannot be contracted by the evil before us. Make it the abode of the good spirit of charity, and the evil spirit of selfishness will depart. Bear in mind that you are God's stewards, and that on all you have he has written, "Occupy for me till I shall come." Forget not that if above all things "you *will* be rich," you will "err from the faith and pierce yourself through with many sorrows." Remember the example of Christ, and the tender, touching thought, that "though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor," and be moved by the melting appeal of his life to be followers of Him. Reflect, that a benevolent spirit, is but a part of religion, and if destitute of the former you also are of the latter. Remember the wants and woes, especially the spiritual wants and woes of others, and by all the freeness with which you have received, cherish the spirit that will ever lead you freely to give. And remember, too, that God's claims are upon you, and his bar of judgment just before you; and so live, wherever you may be, that when at last your stewardship is reviewed, the reward of the faithful, and not the doom of the unfaithful may be yours!

Our subject also suggests,

2. *That the circumstances of our country, especially in view of the present emigration to its western coast, are such as call for much prayer and effort on the part of every patriot and Christian.* —Cotton Mather tells us, that when he was once in the midst of a sermon "On the voice of God in the thunder," a message which he received that *his own* house had just been struck by lightning, "*gave a sensible edge to his discourse!*"—And so the personal, the deep personal interest that so many have in the vast emigration alluded to, should give "a sensible edge" to their sympathies, and *prayers, and efforts.* The emigrants who are going forth, are not

strangers, or from a strange land. They are *bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh.* Multitudes will soon have sons, brothers, husbands, fathers, relatives, and friends on that distant coast. And if they are not to be left to the power of temptation,—to go forth like Lot, as he went to the vale of Sodom, only with worldly motives, and like him to danger and ruin, where even angels could not save all his family,—then the gospel must go with them, and the spirit of God attend them.

We cannot but hope and believe, that in this, one of the most wonderful movements of this wondrous year, God has purposes of mercy for our land and the world; that He designs the planting of free States and Christian institutions, and the extension of commerce, the arts, and the Protestant religion; and that, on the rolling wave, He will roll civilization, and in the end salvation, to a nation born in a day. But *we* must co-work with Him. Our prayers must ascend, and our efforts be put forth, and our gifts be sent, if we would see the gospel extended as fast and widely as our population spreads. When "HOME MISSIONS" meant the supply of a few feeble churches in New England, and a few more in New York and Ohio, feeble efforts might have been sufficient. But now that OUR HOME has grown to be a Continent; its roof the broad arch of heaven, its rooms the prairie and the forest, its halls the valleys of our mighty rivers, its walls two oceans on the east and west, and the torrid and frozen zones on the north and south—*now*, if we would keep *that home*, our house, in order, social, civil, moral, religious, we must not be wanting in corresponding prayer and benevolence. Now that "*Home Missions*" has come to signify providing the gospel for half a world, our faith and effort must expand with its necessities. Said a gentleman, recently, in view of these necessities, "I must *quadruple* my subscription for Home Missions this year, for the special purpose of sending the gospel to California." All should feel the same spirit, and as far as possible imitate so good an example.

Finally,

3. *Our subject suggests a word to those who are going forth to that distant part of our land.*—A gentleman once speaking with a young man who was comparatively a stranger, asked what were his plans for the future. "I am now a clerk," said the young man, "and my hope is to succeed, and get into business for myself." "And what then?" said the gentleman. "Why, then, I hope to prosper, and be able to set up an establishment of my own." "And what next?" "Then to continue in business, and accumulate wealth." "And what next?" "To retire from business, and enjoy the fruits of my labors." "And what next?" "It is the lot of all to die," said the young man thoughtfully, "and I cannot expect to escape." "*And what next?*" once more said the enquirer. But alas! the young man had no answer; he had no *purposes or plans that reached* beyond the present life! Thought-

ful for time, he had no thought for eternity! *Wise* for *this* world, he was *acting the fool for the next?*

Many, yes, all of you have your plans for this world. Step by step, it may be, you could tell what next, and next, and on for years, or perhaps even down to old age! But ask yourself one question, What if death should meet you at some early stage of that future—*what then*? Or even, if you live to old age, still, *what then?* What, when life shall end, and sickness and death shall come? What when eternity must be entered, and you must go and give up your account to God?—Tell me, O! tell me, *what then*—WHAT THEN?

SERMON CCCCXCVI.

BY REV. W. A. SCOTT, D. D.
Of New Orleans, La.

HOPE OF REPUBLICS; OR THE ELEMENTS OF PERMANENCE IN MODERN CIVILIZATION.*

"There shall no man be able to stand before you; for the Lord your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as He hath said unto you."—Deut. 11 : 25.

It has been said of Lafayette, that he was worthy of Liberty, for his stout and noble soul never despaired of her cause. Betrayed, duped, and dying disappointed of the emancipation of his own country, in his own day, he lifted up his eyes to Heaven, and consoled his breaking and magnanimous heart, with the vitality, virtue, freedom, and greatness of future generations. Though born among a haughty aristocracy, his heart was with the people, and his creed their sovereignty. The ambition of a throne was base in his eyes. Despots and kings were with him synonymous terms. Had he not been Lafayette, his highest aim would have been to be a Washington. Generous and glorious Frenchman! ever dear to American Liberty—the more your tomb retreats into the shade of time, the more radiant will it be with glory to the eyes of posterity. And as the image of the sacred mountain, to which millions and generations of devotees are wont to go, grows in proportion as it recedes from view, until it stands

* Delivered on Thanksgiving Day, Dec. 21, 1848, in the Presbyterian Church, in *Lafayette Square, of which* Dr. Scott is Pastor.—*Ed.*

out aloft and solitary in the confines of the horizon, so Republican France, and all regenerated nations, in all coming ages, will send their sons on a pilgrimage of generosity, chivalry, truth and liberty, to thy tomb.

Some historians profess to have discovered a law that renders the permanent prosperity of nations a moral impossibility. They tell us that *all flesh is grass, and the glory of man is as the flower of grass*, both of man as an individual, and of man associated—that nations, like billows, rise and decline—that all things have their ebbing and flowing.

It is true that the flower blossoms only to fade. It is true that all things earthly are changing, changeable, and passing away, except the tendency to change. That alone is immutable. The history of man seems to be rising or falling. Birth, progression, decay—manhood, its vigor, maturity, and decline. And so brief is manhood's stay on this summit, that we cannot tell when it reaches the highest point, nor when it begins to go down. And must it be thus with every nation? Like a tree, is there a time for a nation to be born, take root, spread its branches, yield its fruit, and then decline, decay, fall into oblivion? It is a fixed law of the universe, that communities, like individuals, of which they are composed, no sooner attain their manhood, than they hasten to decrepitude and decay? Has the all-wise Creator ordained that nations may advance, grow till they reach their meridian glory, and that, then, without a pause, they must decline? I do not believe there is any such law in existence. I do not believe that Ineffable Goodness has ordained any such statutes concerning the fall of nations. Again and again the Sacred Scriptures promise ever-enduring prosperity to the Hebrews, if they would continue steadfast in their obedience. There was then no necessity for them to decline. It is admited that the law of progress and decay belongs to physical objects; but it is denied that it does necessarily attach to the intellect, and to moral and religious subjects. It is admitted that the mind may fail in some of its external expressions of functions—as in the failing of the memory—that brilliant intellect may sometimes degenerate—grow feeble for the want of exercise or by dissipation, or be oppressed with the infirmities of age. But it is earnestly denied that this is always so, or that it is absolutely necessary; and if it is admitted, as it must be, that in any solitary instance a great mind goes on improving, or even holding its own, during the entire period of the body's decline from its highest maturity to death, so that at the moment of dissolution the soul goes out on its pilgrimage from the body to the regions of eternity unimpaired; then, we have enough from this solitary instance, to prove that it is *possible* for mental, moral, and spiritual excellence to remain unimpaired to the moment of death: and consequently, what is possible of one mind is possible *of many minds—of the* minds of a whole nation. And as

moral goodness is not effected essentially by the material organization with which the soul is encompassed while in this world, so the mind and its habitudes of goodness and piety, are not, by any inexorable fatality, subjected to the physical laws that govern the decay and dissolution of material habitation; and in a mind that not only remains without decay, but goes on improving, both in intellectual strength and moral excellence, up to the moment of its elimination from the body, we have all the essential elements of prosperity and perpetuity. The developments of a nation in wealth, in arts and arms, are its *Physiques*. These belong to its material organization. These are things that are subject, in some degree, to changes, like those of the seasons of the year. But the intellect, the moral and spiritual habitudes of a nation, may be preserved as indestructible as individuality in morals—as imperishable as individual immortality. It is

> ——"mind, mind alone,
> Hath light and hope, and life and power"

It does not matter who has wealth, nor where it is. It is mind that governs it. It does not matter what becomes of the magnificence or vanity of material things; the mind lives, and its habitudes of virtue and piety, or their opposites, are its eternal costume. It is true of the individual physical man, that he is born, grows to greater or less maturity, and then falls into feebleness, and finally into the grave. And it is true of individual man, moral, intellectual, spiritual, that there is a time when he begins to exist, and that he progresses thenceforward, either in holiness or moral turpitude; but it is not true that he ever ceases to exist. Every soul that has ever been born into the world is still alive. Not a single intellect that has ever emanated from Jehovah, has been or ever will be annihilated. This world does not comprise all men's history. Man is not a mere animal or vegetable, that comes forth in obedience to certain physical laws, grows, ripens, and rots—then, indeed, we might fold our hands and wait our destiny, content with Napoleon's philosophy: "It is written in Heaven." But since this world is obviously not man's goal—not the fruition but the embryo of his existence—since a thousand arguments, and a thousand and one experiences, prove that this world is probationary, and in order to a righteous retribution, some shadowings forth of which only are now visible—since it is the way of Providence to carry on the government of human things in successive and gradually advancing dispensations, as a preparation for the appearance of the new heavens and the new earth—since a law of progress is inherent in intellect—since mind in thousands and millions of instances continues to advance and expand to the last moment of its continuance in the body—since individual mind and personal virtue do, in millions of instances,

continue to advance, to expand, to grow higher, and more and more perfect, without any pause at any mundane height, and never decline—since this is confessedly true of individual virtue and individual intellect, in at least some of the persons that compose communities; and that, too, not of a few or an insignificant number, is it not palpable that a nation, composed entirely of such, *may* continue to advance in everything excellent without any decline.

While I deny that there is any necessity of Fate for a nation to fall from its glory, I admit there is danger that the cup which intoxicated Babylon, Tyre, Carthage, Athens, and Rome, may intoxicate us. There is danger that the dizzy heights which they knew not how to keep, may so turn our heads that we may not be able to stand on them. But there is no fatal necessity that it should be so. *We are able to stand, but free to fall.* While there is danger that wealth and refinement will lead to luxury, vice, degradation, and decline, we possess in Christianity all that is necessary to counteract any such tendencies. The mental vigor and tender charities of the gospel are sufficient to resist the law of decay seen so palpably in the once proud and powerful States of the old world. The Bible, and the Bible alone, can preserve the monuments of our greatness from becoming the monuments of what has been. The intellectual and moral elevation and active benevolence of the gospel, are abundantly sufficient for the glory and perpetuity of a nation. If it be asked, whether it shall ever be said of us, as of the republics of former times, that we were a great people in our day, but that, like them, we have gone glimmering into the dream of things that were—"a schoolboy's tale, the wonder of an hour"—I reply, the answer to the inquiry is in the hands of us and our children. God has left all our future in our own hands. If we can succeed in giving to our native born, and to the millions of the old world cast upon our shores in their infancy and youth, an effective education—including under this term such training as shall render their faculties prompt and active; personal independence and yet subordination, sobriety, neatness and industry—such solid knowledge as shall enlarge to the utmost the meanest of subsistence, by enlarging the capacities of usefulness to their fellow-citizens—such knowledge of themselves as shall inspire them with hope and with the confidence that they are men—FREEMEN—whose bodies and minds and families are really the objects of divine and human benevolence—and such moral and religious instruction as shall inspire them with just views of crime, and associate the idea of happiness with that of honest independence—as shall fill their hearts with a sense of the Divine Being and of their final accountability to Him, and with sentiments of fervent charity towards and sympathy with their fellow-man; if by the continued prosecution of agriculture and of the *true principles of trade* and commerce, we can develop

adequately our vast national resources; if we can succeed in fully developing our moral and intellectual energies, and with these, the material resources on which the maintenance of their healthy activity depends, then our Republic will stand to the end of time; and when the sleeping dust of ages and of empires rises to meet the Son of God, the star-spangled banner shall still be floating in the breeze. Yes, my brethren, in the cultivation of our valleys—in the ores of our mountains—in the commerce of our rivers, lakes, railroads, and sea-boards—in the purity and pre-eminent influence of woman—in the vigorous prosecution of our systems of public instruction—in the universal diffusion of knowledge—in the sublime morality of the Bible—in the purity, vitality, and benevolence of the gospel of Christ, we have the elements of unshaken permanence in our institutions. And I have not a doubt, but that, in spite of the sinister predictions of speculative historians; in spite of the dreams of aristocratic philosophers, and the ill-omened vistas of monarchists, whose wishes are father to their forebodings; in spite of our rapidly increasing population; in spite of the intrigues of a few disappointed, restless, selfish, narrow-minded politicians, that the United States, in every essential particular as she now is, will occupy, for ages upon ages to come, an ever-increasingly glorious position amongst the nations of the earth. And to show that our hope of republics is well founded, I propose to notice still further a few grounds of doubt, and then glance at some of the elements of their permanence.

I. Let it not be argued that we must fall, sooner or later, because all preceding States and Kingdoms have either already fallen, or are in a rapid decline. The past is a good school, but not an infallible prophet. The past is only in part the cause of the present, and of the future. As no two leaves of the forest are exactly alike, nor any two human faces, so neither are any two ages or countries exactly alike. The past may have its semblance; but it never has its exact likeness in the present. The human body is so far the same, as to preserve its personal identity from infancy to old age, and yet its particles are ever changing. The elements of society now are in part the same as the elements of society in ages past; and in part they are different, and in some things wholly unlike and superior to those of any former age. The religious faith of modern times, especially in our country, where there is no unhallowed, adulterous connection between Church and State, is purer than was known in the ancient world: and the religious faith of a nation has greater influence, direct and indirect, upon its prosperity, than all other causes. The predicates, therefore, of no past age are to be applied, without considerable limitations, to the present. And as the history of no other nation corresponds to the *past* and *present* of the American people, so neither should it be considered

as any prophecy of their *future*. The ages of the world and the generations of men that have rolled past to the bourne of those before the flood, are all alike in many respects; and yet each is possessed of some peculiar feature, that gives it a distinctive prominence in the annals of the universe. It is not in classic lore only, that such distinctions have obtained as have been denominated the golden, silver, brass and iron ages; such distinctive appellations are found in sober history, which is indeed nothing less than *philosophy teaching by example*. Even in the history of the wonderful dispensations of infinite mercy to our race, we find the distinction of Adamic, Patriarchal, Mosaic, Prophetic, and Apostolic periods, ages, or dispensations. The world, like individuals, seems to have its infancy, youth, progress, and end. What years are to individuals, centuries are to the world. Sometimes, for generations, and even for centuries, a kind of intellectual and moral sleep has hung over the earth, and the human family remained dormant. And then, again, it has pleased the Divine Ruler, who permits the world to be governed in a great degree by impulses, to call forth a spirit of advancement in light and knowledge, in arts and sciences, and even in our holy religion. In the stormy times of Cromwell, whose history is yet to be written, and who was one of the purest and best and ablest men that England has ever produced, there was a strength of intellect, an earnestness, and a grasp of mind and character, that made such men as Howe, Baxter, and Milton, and a host of their compeers, tower high amid their generation, and stand forth to all coming times, as the beacon-lights of freedom of thought and of conscience. The *Crusades* was an age of strange and almost unaccountable excitements. It well nigh paralyzes belief to read of the tide of living men that Europe poured forth upon Asia for a useless achievement. Millions laid their bones to bleach on the sands of Syria; but the result was, that the arts, sciences, literature, and civilization of the East were brought into half barbarous Europe. The Protestant Reformation was an age of intense religious excitement. The discovery of this continent was the embodiment of an age intensely excited to make discoveries. The results of the civil wars of England, of the Crusades, of the Reformation, and of the discovery of this continent, were not foreseen by the respective agents of these different stupendous events. The immediate actors in carrying out these parts of the world's history, never dreamed of what has resulted from their labors. The mysterious directions of Providence seem first to blind genius as to any consciousness of its own greatness, and then by it, to accomplish the greatest, most unlooked for, and yet most beneficial results. So it has been with the English in Asia and China, and with the Americans on this continent. And hence history should be regarded by us not merely as the *annals of political events*, but as the progress of science, inventions, and literature, and of all the great interests of mankind. History is nothing more or less than a written account of the dispensation of Divine Providence to nations and countries.

And whatever the predominant spirit of any age may be, whether it be for war, or for philosophical or religious speculations, it is the outlet of the over-excited feelings of its communities.

As our Government is an elective government—a judicious combination of the best parts of the best governments that have preceded us—so our age is instinct with those elements of personal worth, enterprise, industry, and independence, and of intelligence, and of a pure religious faith, that lay the foundation of hope for permanence in its best forms of society.

II. There are, and there will be, revolutions such as the world has not yet seen. Power will pass from the less to the greater—from the weak to the strong—from the few to the many. The Old World may become feeble. As the Greece of the Greeks of Otho is not the Greece of Pericles and Leonidas; so the Europe that now is, is not the Europe that has been, nor is it the Europe that is to be. But amidst all these convulsions that now are, and are yet to be, is there any danger to ourselves? Is it foreign invasion or internal conflicts? The former cannot be seriously apprehended even by the most timid. It is true that great nations have fallen by invasions from less cultivated regions of the earth. Such has been the course of things in southern Asia, and such was the fate of the Roman Empire; but in all such cases, corruption and effeminacy have invited the conqueror to the spoils. But no one in his senses apprehends a barbarian overthrow of Europe, or of the United States. The hordes of Russia are not likely to drive Europe back to acorns and skins. The Indians of North America do not present, at present, any appearance of sweeping American arts and agriculture, manufactures, cities, printing-presses, and churches into oblivion. On the contrary, the expanding energies of civilized man, in both hemispheres, are every year shutting up the barbarian forces of the world into smaller and still more narrow spaces. And as to internal conflicts, the greatest causes of fear with us, are the invasion of foreign emissaries, under the guise of teachers for our youth, domestic slavery, and military despotism. The first can be effectually counteracted by our public schools, and by private seminaries of the highest order of excellence for both sexes, by true-hearted republicans. The second, domestic slavery, will be happily disposed of in all its bearings, by the good sense, firmness, compromising spirit, and Christian intelligence of our people. And the last—military despotism, which is far more dangerous than either of the former, can be counteracted by a wise, healthy, and prudent public sentiment, operating through the ballot-box and the press. We are eminently a military people—a nation of soldiers; yet the extent and diversity of our soil, our agricultural and commercial interests, and the love of our people for economy, peace, and domestic society, and of independence—all these traits in our national character and pursuits are powerful obstacles in the way of the establishment of any military despotism—

and to them should be added the combined influence of our schools, of our traditions, and the influence of our Federal Constitution, for the preservation and strict interpretation of which, there is a growing regard in the minds of the American people.

III. The base of modern liberty is wide. The points of radiance of our Republic are numerous. While large towns and cities are growing up on the Pacific, to be closely allied to those of the Atlantic, and of the West, by rail-roads, and steam-vessels, and telegraphic lines, there is also such an immense agricultural region in the interior, in the valleys of our great rivers, that it is impossible for so much power to be consolidated into any one city, or in any one part of the nation, as seriously to endanger the liberties of the whole country. The distance of our cities from one another, with their different local interests, while it renders it impossible for them ever to be leagued together under any misguided, ambitious leader, in a conspiracy against the liberties of the rural districts, also allows greater freedom from petty prejudices and passions. While all the political power of France is in Paris, governments can be made and unmade in a day. The greatest obstacles in the way of the people of Europe to sovereignty, are the great cities of St. Petersburg, Vienna, Berlin, and London, with their royal armies and arsenals, and the traditions and monuments, tombs and regalia of royalty, that everwhere blind or awe the rising masses. The great elements of the world's prosperity, now, however, are such as cannot be lost. The discoveries of modern times will never be forgotten, nor our inventions lost. Men will never forget to make gun-powder and type—the magnetic needle and the steam-engine. The only possible way for these, and such discoveries and inventions, to be superseded, is to make others that shall far surpass them. The gains of modern society over the ancients are gains that cannot be lost. Our natural discoveries can never cease to exist, nor ever cease to produce their effects on society.

If a whole nation, or a kingdom, or continent, should be sunk into the ocean, it would not destroy the rest of the globe, nor disturb the harmony of the planets. So if one part of the civilized world should go back to barbarism, it would not endanger the existence or diffusive power of the best forms of modern civilization in other parts of world. From the pole to the equator, and from ocean to ocean, God has raised up a people in modern times to be witnesses for political freedom and religious faith; so that if it were possible for the besom of destruction to sweep out of existence the Europe of to-day, in ages to come, it would exist in another hemisphere—if not in Australia, yet certainly in America.

IV. While the base of liberty is becoming wider and wider, and therefore stronger and stronger, it is also true that the globe, for all practical purposes, is becoming smaller and smaller, and its different countries are brought nearer and nearer together. This

palpable result of agencies now rapidly at work, is exerting an absolutely incalculable influence upon the destinies of mankind.

So great and rapid are the means of communication in our day, that extension of territory, instead of being just ground of fear for our permanence, is, on the contrary, a means of throwing off a restless population, that will subdue the wilderness, and build cities and States equal to any that have heretofore existed. Our recent extension is the natural result of our institutions and of our growth, just as much so as it is the natural tendency of a boy's limbs to grow into the size and strength of a man, and then require a larger coat than when he was a boy. All we have to do with California and New Mexico, is to imitate the wise policy of the Romans, and win the love of their inhabitants by opening roads, and protecting their interests, and giving them the Bible, and the school-house, and the printing-press. Magnetic telegraphs, and the institutions of the pure gospel of the Saviour of mankind, will seem to modern Mexicans scarcely less the gifts of the gods, than the cannons and horses of Cortes did to their Indian ancestors. Ours are, however, the gifts of the God of peace, and not of the god of war—ours are the implements not of suffering, bondage, and death, but of freedom, life, and happiness.

V. As far as the history of the past establishes any great principle, it is, that no form of government is exempt from agitations, and revolutions, either in its spirit or form, or in both. Monarchies, limited, constitutional, or absolute, oligarchies, and democracies, are all subject to changes, if not in their forms of government, at least in their interpretation. In every government there are tendencies and dispositions apart from its mere letter, as uncontrollable in their nature, as are the human passions from which they spring. This is true of all governments; and in all governments, except in representative republics, the feelings and dispositions, hopes and fears of the mass, or at least of a very large part of the people, are not in harmony with the form and spirit of the government.

In January, France was a monarchy—apparently peaceable, contented, happy, and magnificent. There seemed to be no signs of dissolution. But it was not in harmony with the spirit of the people. In February the monarchy was vanished—utterly gone—and a republic in its stead. So sudden, so entire was the change, as if in a night some ocean volcanic island had been submerged, and in its place, before early morn, another had arisen, blooming in all the fragrance of Paradise. It cannot be denied but that the style, name, and form of the government of England, are sadly out of harmony with the spirit of the people. Under the name of monarchy, they have, to some extent, republican institutions; and just in the degree that there is want of harmony, is there danger of revolutions. And if, in all governments, there is a spirit apart from the government, just as the spirit of a man is a something apart from and independent of his body; and if that spirit of a *nation,* under all forms of government, is constantly struggling to

be free, and to extend itself; and if, in popular representative republics, this tendency is stronger than in other forms of government—all which is readily admitted, yet it is also affirmed that there is, in such popular representative republics, a greater capacity and fitness for the fullest exercise and extension of that power; and that, therefore, it is a great error in many writers on the permanency of republics, to suppose that in them the passions only are freely developed; whereas power, intellectual and moral power, keeps pace with and is actually quickened into life, by the development of independent man. Freedom *energizes* the whole body; it clothes the limbs; gives grace to its motions, and elegance to its whole appearance. Where has there been more energy of character than in the old republics of Greece and Rome, and in the free cities and confederations of the middle ages, and in Cromwell's Protectorate, and in the United States? If we admit, therefore, that our government has a strong tendency to increase its power, it is abundantly equal, in all other respects, to sustain itself with an increase of power—while our institutions foster the instincts of acquisition and empire, they also enlarge our capacities for self-government, and multiply the disposition and means of benevolence. And, with us, the spirit and the body are harmonious. The union is happy—the form of our government is just such as the people desire; or, if it be not, we have constitutionally provided for a revolution every four years. There can be no inducement for an insurrection, or a violent overthrow of our institutions. A little patience and time will effect any change that the great body of the people really desire.

The manifest tendency of our age and of modern society, is progression—onward. Progress is the law of man. Revolutions may be thrown aside—they may be thrown into improper channels, but they do not go backwards. In every convulsion, and revolution, and war in Europe, since 1688, down to this moment, the people have gained something upon their oppressors. There have been failures in attempts at revolution—great mistakes have been committed. And there will be more failures; great errors will be perpetrated. Patriots will yet fall in this glorious work—but something is gained for God and man at every blow. *Truth crushed to earth will rise again.* Long and fierce the strife may rage, but truth and libery will prevail.

> "For Freedom's battle once begun,
> Bequeathed by bleeding sire to son,
> Though baffled oft, is ever won."

Among the elements of permanence in modern civilization, not yet introduced in my discourse, I shall, in conclusion, name two —the PRINTING PRESS, AND MAN'S SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS THAT HE OUGHT TO BE FREE. The art of printing and publishing, so well understood in our day, is justly regarded as the chief of all the inventions that have marked the progress of human genius. It is the most momentous work *in man's* history. It is an art that

contributes to ornament, elegance, and utility. In preserving the memory of former discoveries and perpetuating the knowledge of the past, it confers the greatest advantages on mankind. As the human mind gains on the ignorance of the past, the press daguerreotypes its highest and best forms for the future, and enables us to begin our enquiries at the point which the diligent research of our fathers had arrived at. But the utility of the press is not only seen in its power of perpetuating knowledge, but also in giving to human ideas and knowledge an almost unlimited diffusion. The Creator gave man language to communicate his ideas and perpetuate his discoveries. When the art of printing was not in use, the means of communication were scanty, and the method of perpetuating knowledge, still more defective. The arts of man in a savage state are handed down from father to son, and the history of their deeds, both public and private, is preserved chiefly in songs.

But important as the art of writing was, still, even in its most improved state, it fell unspeakably short of the art of printing. In the East, and generally, it was monopolized by the priests; and when their colleges and temples were overturned and destroyed, then learning perished likewise. Among the Greeks and Romans the cost of transcribing was so great, that but few could possess copies of books, and learning was confined to few individuals. The works of authors who had written in the most elegant style, or on the most useful subjects, were continually in danger of being lost, on account of the small number of copies, by the ravages of time, fire, or civil commotion, or by coming into the possession of men utterly ignorant of their value. Learning has sustained immense losses from all of these causes in past ages; but they cannot be repeated since printing has so multiplied the copies of all the valuable works known to mankind. Nor can the world be any longer imposed upon by the forgeries, interpolations, and corruptions of bigots—such as was practiced to an incredible extent in the dark ages.

By means of the press, the knowledge of different schools and of the most eminent philosophers of all countries is brought to the chamber of the student.

The press has made the acquisition and communication of all knowledge, both ancient and modern, more easy, general, and certain, and perpetuates it to all future ages. By it the continuance of learning in the world is placed beyond the reach of any temporary or local barbarism, or invasion, or national degeneracy; and by it also we are enabled to transmit our discoveries and reflections, and a knowledge of our inventions and improvements in arts and arms, in agriculture and manufactures, and in the science of government, to the ends of the earth, and to the end of ages.

Printing is superior to every other art of a like kind in the perpetuity of its youth. It is not subject, like other arts, to the baneful influence of time or accident; the works of the sculptor are

often broken to fragments and reduced to dust: paintings fade, or are broken to shreds, and finally perish. But printing stamps immortality upon the ideas committed to it, by renewing at will, and without ceasing, exact copies of its work.

In written discourses, images, illustration, variety of language, and power of style are perpetuated, and masterly thoughts are made to live and beget their like. We are made to stand before the living man—and *see* his reasonings exact, clear, overpowering —his exquisite shadings and the harmonious blending of colors— until we see beneath a transparent and glossy skin, the blood circulate, the veins turn blue, and the muscles assume their strength.

The mere speaker is like a statue placed in an elevated niche, that must be cut somewhat roughly and of a proportioned oversize to produce the proper effect at a distance. The written discourse is the life-like natural size. "The press is the tribune amplified. Speech is the vehicle of intelligence, and intelligence is the mistress of the material world.*"

Nor is the beneficial influence of the press confined to the useful arts alone, since it is also intimately connected with whatever is ornamental in the arts of man. For it is the faithful register of the refined inventions of the sublimest geniuses in the most polished ages and countries; and, though the productions of elegant artists may be destroyed—though the best contributions of modern civilization should perish, yet the *descriptions* of the artist's work, and of these institutions being preserved by the press, will serve to raise in future, other artists and other institutions, that shall rival those that have preceded. The press makes *immortal* the works of elegant authors and artists, and thereby holds up a light and example to guide and assist aspiring minds to superior excellence.

The press and the tribune were the two-edged sword of the old French revolution, and of all the revolutions of the present year in Europe. It was the press that taught France to think and to act in 1789, and in February, 1848. The written discourses of Foy, Bignon, Lafitte, Constant, Dupont De l'Eure, Royer-Collard, and the impassioned appeals of Mirabeau and his colleagues, accomplished the political education of France. Speeches that produce but little effect in the Senate, often exercise a great influence in print. If they have less influence in the formation of laws, they have more in the formation of public opinion, and it is public opinion that gives sanction, execution, and permanence to the laws, or overturns and remodels them. He, therefore, who has a thousand readers has a greater influence than he who has a thousand hearers. And as this is peculiarly an age of publishing what is *spoken*, as well as what is written: so the institution of popular liberty, founded and supported in a great degree by the press, must live and flourish so long as liberty has a voice to speak.

* Benjamin *Constant: Orators* of France, p. 127.

The Heaven-descended right of suffrage, is the mother of all our laws and institutions. It is the foundation of our whole government and of our whole constitution. *Our constitution is our body politic at rest. Our elections are our body politic in action.* And the great guarantee of the one and trumpet-call of the other is the press. An arbitrary, iniquitous, chaotic aristocracy, may grow up where there is no press, and sit like an incubus for centuries upon the inalienable rights of man. Leagues, alliances, public and secret, may be cemented by charters, monopoly grants, and royal marriages, to enable certain families and classes to consume without producing—to live without laboring, and possess themselves of all the public offices without being qualified to fill them, and to seize upon all the honors of the state, without having merited any—but when the press speaks forth, their days are numbered. There is no power in earth or hell that can prevail over and keep a people in slavery, that are taught by an unfettered press the right of self-government.

The press is more mighty than armies, kings, and senates—as rapid and intelligent as thought. None are too low for it to reach. None can be above its influence. It fascinates, inspires, and forms the masses of society for every effort. The strugglings of the press for liberty, and of the conscience for freedom, have filled all Europe with convulsions. It was the press, aided by the living teacher, that produced the great revolution of the sixteenth century. It was the press that made England a Protestant country. The press has removed the moss of ages that had covered up the origin and root of things, and discovered their true nature. It has opened the book of inalienable rights to the people, and taught them how to resist the usurpations of force and fraud. It was the press that overthrew the parliaments of the French Restoration. And of the blood and vitals of the press were born the government and monarchy of July, 1830; and yet under his majesty, Louis Philippe, the press was fettered and tortured. For seventeen years this press-made monarch compelled the press either to lie or to be silent—compelled it either to abstain from discussing the principles of the government, or to submit to the blows of a gouty senate. It was bound hand and foot, and placed in manacles between the "ruins of confiscation and the burning tombs of Salazie."

But the day of reckoning came. For the press, like Prometheus, the more it is bound and fettered, the more eloquent, the more inspired, the more indignant, the more tempestuous, and the more Jove-defying it becomes. The very shaking of its chains sent the ungrateful monarch it had made, and all his dynasty, to the "tomb of all the Capulets," even before a righteous Providence had given his body to the worms. "Unlimited liberty of the press," was the exclamation with which General Bertrand closed all his public speeches. And he was right. *The bulwarks of all republics are the Bible and the unlimited freedom of the press.*

It is true that the press, like every other good thing, may be

abused, and be employed to spread error and impiety. It is sometimes the case that Divine Providence permits those very means, which, when applied, are the most effectually conducive to the best purposes, to be so abused and misapplied as to become the most potent engines of mischief.

Even the Son of Mary was set for the fall and rise of many, and for a sign which shall be spoken against. The result of Messiah's coming among men, depends altogether upon their own spiritual discernment of Him. The gospel is salvation to the believer, but destruction to the unbeliever. Salvation and doom are correlative terms. Heaven and hell are correlative places. Great blessings suppose great evils.

It is impossible for printing to spread errors more baneful than were propagated before its invention, while on the other hand, it enables the friends of truth and religion to pursue the baleful steps of their adversary with an antidote that cannot be nullified, so that this wonderful effort of human skill not only supplies the most sure methods of perpetuating every new discovery in the other arts and sciences, but at the same time affords the ablest assistance in the support of religion, truth, and virtue.

There remains one other out of many more grounds of hope for the perpetuity of Republics, that I cannot wholly omit; and that is—*Man's self-consciousness that he is a child of Liberty, and that he is capable of self-government, and of perpetuating the best principles and forms of government.* Philosophers and theologians tell us of a moral sense, and a religious sense in man, the existence of which prove that man is a moral and religious being, just as his lungs prove that he was made to breathe. So likewise the political sense,—that is, a faculty of being conscious that we possess within us the elements of freedom from our Maker, and which also excites all men, in all ages, to desire the fullest enjoyment of civil liberty, is a proof that man is made to be free, and to be happy only in the enjoyment of freedom. The soul's self-consciousness of its own existence, of its own free agency, and of the existence of God, has long been regarded as one of the strongest proofs of a Deity. "The longing after immortality," in all men, and in all countries, and the conjectures and hopes, even of the rudest, for a brighter existence after death, is proof almost as strong as demonstration, that there is a future immortal state of being. In like manner, the hopes of mankind, concerning a political millennium, may be deemed a prophecy of its coming. Such hopes have existed from the earliest times, and have grown stronger and stronger, and spread wider and wider, as cycle after cycle rolled down the skies. Have the ardent longings of the purest and best men, of the wisest and the holiest men of antiquity and of modern times, been raised up merely to be thrown to the ground! Divine Providence will not thus tantalize the sons of men. The longings of our race after freedom have sometimes been embodied in tradition, in songs, and in fables; but even the

fables were imitations of the truth. The shadow is proof that there is a substance.

The universality of some kind of religious worship or belief—the tenacity with which most men hold to their religious dogmas, and even the excesses committed by religious zeal, bigotry, and superstition, are deemed a strong proof of the reality and vast importance of religion. There is in man a religious sense that recognizes, at the bottom of all this, the earnest desire of his soul for happiness, for communion with God, for participation in the divine nature as its true birthright. This anxious longing of man's spirit to pass the gulf which separates his God-derived soul from its glorious Creator—this ardent wish, even though to himself unconscious of its full import, to secure that union with God, the Father of all spirits, which alone can renew human nature—though ignorant of the way to accomplish it, still struggling forth amidst superincumbent masses of error, delusion, falsehood, superstition, and unbelief, and aspiring after that heart-healing, soul-vitalizing power, which Christianity only reveals, is justly regarded as a proof of the truth of the gospel.

The way for the introduction of Christianity was prepared by the co-working of supernatural with natural elements. The natural development of the heathen world had prepared them for the new light which emanated from Judea. The whole history of the Jews was preparatory to the coming of the Messiah. It was emphatically, in every sense, the fullness of time, when God made the highest manifestations of Himself to man by His Son, who was the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and the fullness of the ineffable Godhead. The Messiah was born King of the Jews, whose political life was a theocracy, and a type of the *Kingdom of God.* He was the culminating point of all Jewish light and glory; and as the particular typifies the universal—the earthly, the celestial—so David, the monarch who had raised the political theocracy of the Jews to the pinnacle of glory, typified that greater monarch, in whom the *Kingdom of God* was to display its glory.* Christ sprang from the fallen line of royal David, just as the sceptre was departing from Judah, and the lawgiver from between his feet.

In the minds of both Jews and Pagans there were many gross errors about the coming and character of the Messiah, but neither their unbelief nor their erroneous faith, made void the truth of God. The all-wise Creator working good out of evil, sometimes uses men's errors to lead them to a knowledge of the great truths of salvation. Superstition often paves the way for faith, and incredulity itself becomes the handmaid of the sublimest piety. Oppression prepares the way for liberty. Moses came when the tale of bricks was doubled. So He who *maketh the wrath of man to praise him, and restraineth the remainder of wrath*—who raiseth up

* See Neander's great work, Life of Christ, p. 19.

one and casteth down another—and whose right it is to reign, has condescended to the plans of men in training them for civil and religious liberty. God has often condescended not merely to the feelings and thoughts of men, but even to their failings and their prejudices, not to approve of them, but to use them as a means of bringing men to the truth. "God," says Neander, "condescended to the platforms of men in training them for belief in the Redeemer, and meets the aspirations of the truth-seeking soul even in its error." The longings of the whole world for a Saviour—the earnest expectations of both Jews and Pagans, that a deliverer would come, were rays of light streaming from the invisible world, which on other subjects and in all other ways was unfathomable darkness. These rays found their embodiment in the Star of Bethlehem, which pointed to the Sun of Righteousness then risen upon the world for its universal illumination.

In patriarchal times—in the Hebrew commonwealth—in the earliest forms of Pagan governments—in the best days of Greece and Rome, Divine Providence gave some pledge and earnest of better things to come.

The great idea of man is redemption—from sin—through the Messiah, and from ignorance, slavery, and every evil, as a fruit and consequence of his redemption from sin. The two greatest days in the annals of the human race, are the day of the Incarnation of the Son of God, and the day of Representative Republicanism. And as all the previous history of the world was a preparation for the one, so also it was for the other. The longings of mankind for republican institutions, whether embodied in poetry, devotion, or romance, whether uttered by Plato or Sir Thomas Moore, were streamlets of light foretelling the luminary that was to appear in the fullness of time. All past history—the thousands of years, and the hundreds of generations that have passed, have all been in order to and co-laborers for the present. The results of their labors in their best forms, are the representative republics of our day. The way for the development of the model of representative republicanism, was most wondrously prepared by the traditions, longings and aspirations of the ancients, by the discovery of this continent, and by the precise time of the discovery, and the circumstances, condition, internal and external, civil and religious, of the nations that discovered and colonized in the New World, and especially in the times and characters that Providence ordered for the settlement of the English colonies in America.

As in the original creation, the *earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light*—there were faint streamings of light over the immense chaos: but no sun until afterwards the Almighty collected the gleamings into a great globe of light, and set the sun in *the firmament of the heaven to give* light upon the

earth, and to rule over the day and over the night. So the Ineffable, in tracing out with his finger this globe, and in writing its history, when as yet none of its stupendous events "were fashioned, being imperfect"—reserved this continent to be the firmament of the sun of human Freedom, into which should be gathered and condensed all the hopes and aspirations of bards and prophets, and of all devout and earnest true-hearted souls, who have loved their race and labored and prayed for their emancipation from error and sin. It is in the teachings of Revelation, that the world is to be filled with the glory of God; in the institutions of modern civilization, which are chiefly the effects of the Gospel, and are necessary in order to the fulfilment of its glorious mission on the earth—in the promises, prophecies, and coming glorious realities of Messiah's reign, that we see the unfailing hope of Republics, and the undying elements of their perpetuity.

In all ages and in all countries, wherever the faintest effulgence of liberty has gleamed upon the soul, there has been earnest striving after its plenitude. True liberty, under constitutional forms, the sole passion of the generous heart, is the only treasure worthy of being coveted. Its victories are those of intellect and not of brutal force; its principles pass not away, but are eternal. It holds all men to be brothers—recognizes no legal authority but that of responsible magistrates, no moral superiority, but that of virtue. Such liberty is destined to see pass before it, the stormy flight of absolute empires, like those clouds that dim for a moment the purity of a serene sky, and will at no distant day, see disappear before her triumphal march, all custom-house barriers and secret tribunals, all prosecutions for political offences, all aristocracies, monopolies, close corporations, standing armies, censorships of the press, of schools, and of religion; and in a holy alliance in the name of Right, Independence, and of a common interest, and of civilization, tranquility, happiness, and religion, will confederate national congresses, confer for the amicable settlement of all national differences, and the sword shall perish forever.

LIBERTY, which has been the midnight meditation of the sage, and the inspiration of the poet, and the long desired Messiah of those that have been sitting in chains and darkness for ages, and for whose almighty avatar the very tombs of the past have cried out, has at last descended from heaven upon the earth to redress and embellish it; to be the life of commerce, and the inspiration of the fine arts, the first aspiration of youth, and the sublime invocations of old age, and the pathway to fadeless glory. And after that she shall have broken the chains of ignorance, meanness, covetousness, superstition, error, and bigotry; liberty will lead forth her illuminated procession with palm branches, amid hymns of glory to attend the last and eternal funeral of civil and religious despotism. AMEN.

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THE MAGNANIMITY OF THE CHRISTIAN SPIRIT.

"And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus receive my spirit! And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."—*Acts* vii. 59, 60.

This brief record of the death of the first martyr to Christianity, is a complete refutation of one objection, which its enemies have urged against it. They have asserted, and often with an air of triumph, not merely that its doctrines are absurd, but that its spirit is degrading to the dignity of human nature. In their estimation, the lofty aspirations of ambition, the indignant spirit which kindles at every affront or injury, and visit it with implacable resentment, and the sanguinary exploits of renowned conquerors, constitute the elements of true greatness. Hence the homage, which in all ages has been paid to the daring enterprizes of cupidity and ambition; the prompt and cheerful obedience which has been rendered to the laws of honor, falsely so called; the indignant infliction of evil for evil, and the valor and skill which have been displayed in waging sanguinary wars. Those who place these achievements, and the spirit which prompts them, among the characteristics of true greatness, in the temper and morality which the gospel inculates see nothing to admire. Its devout, meek, patient, and forgiving spirit, they consider not adapted to elevate, but to depress men in the scale of true dignity and greatness. That this sentiment is false, and fraught with danger to the temporal and eternal interests of men, we hope to make evident.

We have not time to notice all the distinctive features of the Christian spirit. We shall confine our attention mainly to those which entitle it to the character of genuine magnanimity. We

cannot accomplish this purpose, however, without subserving another of amazing moment to the professed disciples of the Lord Jesus. It will furnish them with a safe criterion of character—a test by which the validity of their claims to membership in His family may be tried.

What, then, are the elements of true greatness—of real magnanimity—embraced in the spirit which the gospel inculcates, and which instrumentally it originates and sustains?

I. Its greatness is shown by the victories which it achieves over the corrupt affections of the human heart. The existence of these affections is denied by few, even of those who withhold their assent from the statements of the Bible respecting the extent of native depravity. By the unsparing censures which they pass upon those who give unbridled indulgence to impure and malevolent passions, they make it abundantly evident that they believe in their existence. Nay, many attest their existence in their own bosoms, by pleading in self-justification, their inability to control them.

None who profess the Christian spirit, doubt that by nature there dwelleth no good thing in them;—that the heart, unsanctified by the Spirit of God, is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." With them, the corruption of the heart is a matter of painful consciousness. From the pollution and power of sin, they pant to be delivered; but all human expedients for its expulsion, are vain. Philosophers and uninspired moralists have given wise rules for the government of the appetites and passions. The authority of human law has restrained from acts of impurity, fraud and violence. But neither the teachings of philosophy, nor the authority of law, nor both combined, have eradicated the passions which prompt to deeds of evil. And they have often been insufficient to hold them in check. To cleanse the corrupt fountain whence issue the streams of pollution and misery, which desolates families, societies, and nations, they have done nothing. They have never expelled from human bosoms, selfishness, pride, envy, impure affections, the inordinate love of the world, repining under the afflictive dispensations of Providence, and enmity toward God or man. All that human wisdom and power have been able to do, is merely to *restrain* the grosser ebullitions of depravity.

The explusive power of the Christian spirit has done more.—By its introduction into the heart, its native darkness and impurity have been partially expelled; its pride, selfishness, and inordinate attachment to things earthly, have been diminished; and it has been expanded with benevolence, not toward *friends* merely, but *foes*, and love and devotion to God. Imperfect as is the degree of it in the present life, by its introduction into their hearts, its subjects are wonderfully transformed. Old things pass away

and all things become new. The passionate become meek, the fraudulent just, niggardly generous, the intemperate sober, the violent gentle, the impure chaste, the profane prayerful and devout, and the vindictive forgiving. The worshippers of mammon, by its transforming power, become spiritually-minded, and "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God."

What we have said concerning the purifying efficacy of the Christian spirit, is not disproved by the fact, that those who give decisive evidence that they possess a measure of it, often give mournful proof of remaining depravity. In this life they are but *partially* sanctified. Nor is the fact of the change wrought in the heart by this spirit set aside or weakened by the admission, that many who profess to have received it, exhibit none of its celestial fruits in the life. An apostle has taught us, that "they are not all Israel that are of Israel." "But what is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord?" No fact is more clearly established than that multitudes of all ages, from the little child to the old man leaning upon his staff—of every grade of intellect, and of all ranks and conditions—in every period of time, and in every condition of society, *have* experienced the change of which we are speaking. They have abandoned courses of evil which they had before eagerly pursued, resisted temptations to which they had yielded, and been eminent examples of meekness, spirituality, benevolence to men, and zeal for the glory of God.

And who exhibit the greatest magnanimity? Those who give indulgence to unhallowed affections, or those, who by the grace of God, labor to exterminate them? Those who live after the course of this world, or those who are crucified to it by the cross of Christ, and strive to "perfect holiness in the fear of God?"

These inquiries admit of but one answer. There is no magnanimity in self-indulgence—in following the corrupt inclinations of the heart; but there is real greatness in Christian self-denial—in the victories of holiness over sin. There is real moral grandeur and heroism in cutting off the right hand, and plucking out the right eye that offend, and governing the heart and life by God's holy and immutable law.

II. The greatness of the Christian spirit is evident from its superiority to the principles, spirit, and practices of this world. Many of the practices in which the men of the world indulge—many of the maxims by which they regulate their conduct and prevailing spirit, are in direct conflict with God's requirements. With them, pecuniary advantage, honor, or the indulgence of the appetites and passions, separately or combined, is the paramount object; and, provided the pursuit of it be so conducted as not to trangress human law, many seem to think they have done nothing deserving censure, even though the feelings of others are outraged

and their rights disregarded. If, in the pursuit of their favourite objects they do not trangress human law, they take it for granted they do not the Divine. That an act may be legally right, and at the same time morally wrong, seems not to have entered their minds. With many, public opinion, however erroneous, and human law, though in direct conflict with the Divine, constitute the standard of morality. Hence the pleas so often urged in vindication of the traffic in intoxicating drinks, divorce on the most trifling ground, the desecration of the Sabbath, public amusements of corrupting tendency, licentiousness, and offensive war. Nay, duelling, suicide, the holding of men "for filthy lucre's sake," in involuntary bondage, and converting them into mere "goods and chattels," and even the accursed slave-trade, have their advocates.

We rejoice to state that many who prefer no claim to the possession of the Christian spirit, hold the things just mentioned in utter detestation. They are distinguished for the exercise of the humane and social affections, have a keen sense of justice and honor, and are noble examples of a disinterested love of country. But these amiable attributes of character, notwithstanding they give their chief attention and regards to the interests of this world, and live as exclusively to themselves and the objects of their selfish attachment, as if there were no God to whom they owe their supreme homage. They refuse to deny themselves for His sake, and offer to Him the sacrifice of humble and grateful hearts. They form their plans, transact their business, and seek their own pleasure, to the utter neglect of the great end for which he dignified them with a rational and immortal existence. This class of amiable rejecters of the claims of God to their love and service, embraces many who seem wholly to overlook the necessity of right motives and affections to render actions, which are correct in form, acceptable to God. Provided their words are truthful and kind, and their visible deportment correct, they pass no sentence of condemnation upon themselves, though pride, envy, discontent, impure affections, and enmity, burn and rankle in their bosoms.

Infinitely superior to the system of the world's ethics, is the course to which the Christian spirit prompts men. So far as they are influenced by it, they do not inquire whether an act or course of conduct have the sanction of human law or public opinion, but whether it be right?—whether the Word of God approve it? *Him* they strive to please and honor. To receive His approbation and promote His glory, they cheerfully sacrifice their ease and pleasure, their wordly interest, and the friendship of men. Abraham, when called of God to leave "Urr of the Chaldees," and his kindrid, for a land to him unknown, obeyed the heavenly mandate, and "went out, not knowing whither he went." By

this act, he exposed himself to the world's reproach and scorn; but the opinion of men had little influence with him, when it contravened the will of God. Moses, when a candidate for the highest honors of the court of Egypt, "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the *reproach* of Christ *greater riches* than the treasures in Egypt." Nehemiah, when urged by his friends to seek safety, in an hour of peril, by deserting the post of duty and concealing himself in the courts of the temple, with heroic decision of purpose and real magnanimity of soul, replied: "Should such a man as I flee? and who is there that being as I am, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in." When the apostles, after having been prohibited by the high-priest and elders to preach Christ to the people, persisted in their work, they justified themselves by appealing to the authority under which they acted. "We ought," said they, "to obey *God* rather than *man*." Upon this principle, Paul, the Reformers, our Puritan forefathers, and "the noble army of the martyrs," acted. They cheerfully sacrificed the honors, the pleasures, the possessions and friendships of the world, in order to serve God and secure an inheritance in His kingdom. They looked beyond "the things which are seen and temporal, to those that are unseen and eternal."

And who exhibit most true dignity and greatness? those who act in accordance with the maxims, the spirit, and the ethics of the world, or those who make the Word of God the rule of duty?—those who forego eternal joys for momentary gratifications, or those who sacrifice the latter, when they conflict with the claims of the former?—those who live to themselves, or those who make it their governing aim, though at the sacrifice of what they hold most dear on earth, to glorify and enjoy God? No candid person can be at a loss for an answer to these enquiries.

III. The Christian spirit exhibits its moral grandeur and magnanimity under the infliction of unprovoked injuries. Under malevolent treatment, the spirit of the world is bitter and vindictive. Its subjects, even when restrained by education, conscience, public opinion, or the supremacy of the law from avenging their wrongs, they awaken implacable hatred towards the authors of them. Were opportunities afforded and restraints to be removed, their causeless injuries would be visited by speedy and terrible retribution. Not unfrequently they have been. Examples are not wanting of individuals, suffering under real or imaginary injuries, who have watched for years for an opportunity to avenge them. When it occurred, they seized it as the tiger pounces on his prey, and left the victims of their hate lifeless or convulsed with their final agony.

Such are not the fruits of the Christian spirit. These consist in

the cheerful forgiveness of injuries, and deeds of kindness toward their authors, prompted by holy and benevolent affections. The glorious Founder of our religion, not only forbids us to render evil for evil, but requires us to overcome evil with good, and to exercise towards enemies a meek and forgiving spirit. "Recompence to no man evil for evil. Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath. Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." These are the laws of His blessed Kingdom. Such importance does he attach to these and similar commands, that He has made obedience to them the condition of obtaining forgiveness of our heavenly Father. "If you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Nay, in the prayer which he taught His disciples, we find this emphatic petition, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." He requires us when we pray for forgiveness from God, to give a solemn bond, the penalty of violating which, is eternal condemnation, that we will forgive others as we pray to be forgiven. Such morality,—morality so utterly at variance with the maxims, spirit and usages of the world—may well claim a celestial origin.

Examples of such a spirit are not wanting. The persecuted apostle of the Gentiles could in truth say for himself and his suffering brethren, "Being reviled we bless; being persecuted we suffer it; being defamed we entreat." From the records of ecclesiastical history we learn that the Jews became so incensed at the apostle James because he preached that Jesus was the Messiah, that they put him to a violent death; and that while suffering its agonies, he earnestly prayed that they might be forgiven. Stephen, when dying under a shower of stones, which his enemies poured upon him, "kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, Lord lay not this sin to their charge." Examples of this sort were not confined to the apostolic age. The dark and suffering periods of persecution abounded with them. And, much as they lack in spirit of Christian forgiveness in the professed disciples of the Lord Jesus is to be deplored, we believe it has, in centuries gone by, existed, and that it now exists among them to a far greater extent than the children of disobedience are willing to admit. One example I cannot forbear to omit.

David Brainerd, after asking forgiveness from one of whom he had spoken disrespectfully, adds, "God has made me willing to do anything that I can do consistent with truth, for the sake of peace, and that it might not be a stumbling-block to others. For this reason, I can cheerfully forego and give up what I verily believe, after the most mature and impartial search, is my right in some instances. God has given me the disposition, that if a man has done me an hundred injuries, and I,(though ever so much

provoked to it) have done him only one, I feel disposed and heartily willing humbly to confess my fault to him, and on my knees to ask forgiveness of him, though at the same time he should justify himself in all the injuries he has done me, and should only make use of my humble confession to blacken my character the more, and represent me as the only person guilty; yea, though he should as it were insult me and say, he knew all this before, and that I was making work for repentance." But we have a more illustrious example of a forgiving spirit than is furnished by the lives of Paul, or Stephen, or James, or Brainerd. When the incarnate Son of God was expiring upon the cross in unutterable agony, amidst the taunts and insults of His murderers, He prayed, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." Compared with the meek, forgiving spirit of the gospel, that of the irascible and vindictive spirit of the world is abject meanness. The difference between them was well expressed by one, whose friend when smarting under an injury, inquired whether he did not think it would be *manly* to avenge it. He replied, "I think it would be *man-like* to avenge, and *God like* to forgive it." There is real magnanimity of soul,—a moral grandeur in acts of Christian forgiveness,—which make the avenging of injuries and the chivalrous deeds of the world's heroes and conquerors, appear degrading and even contemptible.

IV. The magnanimity of the Christian spirit is shown by the support and consolation which it gives in seasons of sorrow and pain, and the victory which it achieves over the king of terrors. It enables those ancient worthies of whom such honorable mention is made in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, patiently to suffer "cruel mockings and scourgings, yea moreover of bonds and imprisonment," and armed their souls with holy fortitude when "stoned, sawn asunder, tempted and slain with the sword." Job, sustained by this spirit, as he sat down amidst the ruins of all his earthly comforts, with celestial composure and peace, said, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Fortified by this spirit, David, when his life was unrighteously sought by his enemies, triumphantly exclaimed "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me upon a rock." Under the sustaining power of this spirit Paul, even when his bosom was pervaded with the sense of his own weakness, exultingly said, I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me." It enabled him and his suffering brethren amidst want, weariness, scorn, enmity, and persecution, "to glory in tribulation," and in the language of assured faith to say,

"Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Thousands of the possessors of this spirit, when bending in the agony of grief over dying friends and kindred, and over their graves when dead, have sweatly acquiesced in the will of God. The feeling of their hearts has been, "Not *our* will, but *thine* be done." And signal have been the victories which it has gained over the cruel spoiler, death. The sweet Psalmist of Israel said, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." In anticipation of his departure from the world, Asaph thus expressed his soul-sustained confidence in God: "My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever." Paul, panting to enjoy the Saviour's presence in heaven, said, "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ." In the prospect of his speedy removal to eternity he was enabled to say," I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." This victory over death was not the exclusive privilege and achievement of saints, endowed with the gift of inspiration. Since that was withdrawn, thousands have died in the triumphs of faith in Jesus. And they have embraced all ages and every grade of intellect and variety of native temper and education. It would be delightful to contemplate the victory of many of them over the king of terrors, but our limits allow us to notice only a few.

Nathan W. Dickerman, an uncommonly lovely and interesting child, died in the eighth year of his age. During his long and painful sickness, he enjoyed great peace in believing in Jesus. To him, death had no terrors. Shortly before he died, he sent this message to an absent friend. "Tell him I'm very happy—my Saviour is precious—and if we don't meet on earth again, I hope we shall meet in heaven."

Catherine Brown, whose conversion was one of the early fruits of missonary labour among the Cherokee Indians, died young. When it became evident that her final hour on earth was near, she said, "I feel perfectly resigned to the will of God. I know he will do right with His children. I thank God that I am entirely in his hands, I feel willing to live or die, as He thinks best. My only wish is that he may be glorified.

The widow of the late Rev. Dr. Blatchford, of Lansingburgh, who through a long life was an ornament to her sex, and an honor to humanity and evangelical religion, in the early part of her last sickness, suffered some disquietude of mind, under a sense of her own unworthiness. But the Sun of Righteousness soon dispelled the gloom. "Now," said she, "I enjoy not merely a glimpse

but a full blaze of the divine glory as revealed to me through Christ. I dared to hope and pray only for *peace*, that I might be delivered from darkness, but O, it is the *fulness of joy*, the *fulness of joy*. And can it be that I am so blessed? It's wonderful! it's wonderful! matchless condescension! infinite grace!" In the sermon delivered at her funeral, her pastor remarked, "At one time she seemed in a perfect transport of joy in view of her departure. All present were filled with awe, and thought her just about to burst the chains of earth and soar away to the mansions of peace, as she raised her dying hands, and with heaven beaming in her countenance, exclaimed, "I'm mounting, O I'm mounting! O I desire to see the whole world filled with the glory of God."

The Rev. John Janeway, an accomplished scholar, died in England at the age of twenty-four. During the greater part of his sickness, he seemed to enjoy the bliss of heaven. Shortly before he expired, he said, "Let no Christian ever be afraid of dying.—Death is sweet to me. Praise is now my work, and I shall be engaged in that sweet employment for ever. I shall in a few hours be in eternity, singing the song of Moses and of the Lamb."

The late Dr. Payson, when convulsed with agony, said, "While my body is thus tortured, the soul is perfectly happy and peaceful. My soul is filled with joy unspeakable." Multitudes of Christians have died in a similar manner. Infidelity and irreligion never obtained such a victory over death. Nothing but the Christian spirit ever did. And what spectacle on earth can be more sublime than that of a feeble mortal vanquishing the king of terrors, by the might of Him "who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel?"

V. We have a further proof of the magnanimity of the Christian spirit, in the benevolence and grandeur of its purposes, and in the labors and sufferings to which it prompts in the execution of them. It leads one to yearn over a world lying in wickedness, and to employ the means which God has ordained to enlighten and save it. Under its constraining power, the apostles went forth and proclaimed in the ears of all to whom they could gain access, the glad tidings of salvation through Immanuel's blood. To this noble work they devoted all their strength and energy, in the face of scorn, enmity, persecution, and all the appalling apparatus of martyrdom. But this age of blessed zeal and triumph was followed by a night of fearful darkness and corruption of more than a thousand years' duration. But the morning star of the Reformation heralded the dawn of a bright and blessed day, whose beams of hope and promise it is our exalted privilege to behold. Far removed as the Church is from the elevation of Christian attainment which she ought to have reached, it cannot be denied that

during the last half century there has been a great increase of the missionary spirit. In the minds of thousands of the disciples of the Lord Jesus, the purpose is formed in reliance upon His grace, while life shall last, to labor and pray for the conversion of the world, and the training up of the succeeding generation to carry forward the work when their bodies moulder in the dust. For the accomplishmest of the grand and God-like purpose of spreading the gospel through the world, hundreds of thousands of dollars are yearly contributed, a large proportion of which is from the hard earnings of industry and the scanty pittance of the poor.—Since this new era of missions commenced, hundreds of devoted men and women have gone to distant, barbarous continents and islands to make known to their benighted and perishing population the salvation of the gospel. Constrained by the love of Christ, they cheerfully bid adieu to country and kindred, cross oceans, penetrate inhospitable and insalubrious regions, and expose themselves to piercing cold and scorching heat, and all the privations, hardships, and sufferings of savage life. Many of them have already fallen victims to incessant toils and insalubrious climate; and some by the hand of savage violence. Still, those who survive are not disheartened and dismayed. They are now prosecuting their benevolent, self-denying labors amidst the frosts and snows of Labrador, and on the burning plains of Asia and Africa. Prophecy assures us this spirit shall live and increase till the glad tidings of salvation shall have been published to all people.

Who has not admired the fortitude and enterprize of those who for the sake of discovery or gain, have traversed unknown oceans, circumnavigated the globe, and penetrated into the heart of unexplored and barbarous kingdoms? Their boldness of purpose, their fortitude under suffering, their heroism in danger, and perseverance against seemingly insuperable difficulties, have won for them the admiration of the world. The daring purposes and enterprizes of ambition, have done the same for their authors. Napoleon sought to bring all Europe and part of Asia and Africa under his control; and Alexander achieved the conquest of the world. By their bold and comprehensive plans and purposes, and their indomitable resolution and untiring perseverance, they secured to themselves the honours of an earthly immortality. But what were *their* purposes and exploits in the scale of moral grandeur, compared with those which Christian love has originated!—In importance to mankind, what are travels and voyages of discovery, and the acquisitions of science, and gains of commerce, secured by them, compared with the blessings of the gospel of peace? The advantages of the former are limited to the present transient state of existence; those of the latter are eternal. And the former have often been procured by acts of injustice and vio-

lence. For what purpose did Alexander and Bonaparte labor to extend their power and authority over the nations? Not to *bless*, but to make them subservient to their own low ambition and pleasure. Both made their way to empire through countries desolated by their armies, over the ruins of pillaged and conflagrated towns and cities—over the gory, lifeless bodies of slaughtered millions, and amidst the tears and sighs of those whom they had bereaved.

The Christian Spirit seeks the conquest of the world, not to enslave, but to emancipate it; not to curse, but to enrich it with the choicest blessings. Although it does not seek, as its main end, the temporal amelioration of mankind, yet its humane and benevolent work will not be fully accomplished till all the forms of despotism on earth give place to free and righteous government; till fraud and oppression shall cease; till the last accursed slave ship shall retire from the coast of injured, bleeding Africa, and all her enslaved children shall be made free; till the blessings of civilization and science shall be diffused throughout the world; and "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Did the spirit of Christian benevolence contemplate nothing more than the emancipation of mankind from temporal evils, and putting them in possession of the blessings of civilization, science, and of free and equitable governments, all other schemes of good, compared with this enterprize, would have little to command admiration. But these temporal benefits of Christianity, great and invaluable as they are, do not constitute its chief mission. The spirit of Christian benevolence contemplates men mainly in their relations to God and the world of eternal retribution; as rational and immortal beings, ruined by sin, and offered salvation in the gospel. Through the medium of the revelation which God has given, it views them as destitute of holiness, and obnoxious to His eternal curse, and yet as candidates for the bliss and glory of heaven. While it weeps over their sin and peril of perdition, it taxes its energies to the utmost, to convey to every member of our fallen race, the welcome message that he may nevertheless be pardoned, and purified, and exalted to the more princely dignity of a son of God, and made heir "to an inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, eternal in the heavens." Till these glad tidings shall be published in the ears of all our world's population, accompanied by all the tenderness and power of Christian entreaty, and the supplicating energy of prayer, that these means may be blessed to their salvation, the object of its benevolent desires and purposes will not have been attained. In respect to moral grandeur, all others have no glory "by reason of the glory that excelleth."

My brethren, do we realize the dignity and obligations of our high calling? The littleness of dishonesty, falsehood, vindictive-

ness, and the love of things earthly for their own sake, we ought not merely to shun, but despise and detest. If we be in reality what we profess to be,—"The sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty," we were made such for great and noble ends. It becomes us to wage an unrelenting war with all sin, overcome the world by faith; to "forgive those who trespass against us," as we hope to be forgiven of God; to labour, contribute of our substance, and pray without ceasing for the spread of the Gospel and the conversion of the nations. If we thus make evident the validity of our claim to the possession of the Christian spirit, we may hope to be God's agents in accomplishing his purposes of mercy toward our race, to triumph over the last enemy, and that "an abundant entrance shall be administered to us into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Are there any present who look upon the Christian spirit as degrading to human dignity? Nothing so exalts it. It purifies the heart, achieves the noblest victories, forms, and labors with invincible perseverance, to accomplish the most stupendous purposes of benevolence in regard to the great brotherhood of humanity, and makes its possessor a son and heir of God. Compared with this, all other dignity is meanness. This is the high-born spirit of heaven—the spirit of Him who came from thence and laid down His life a ransom for sinful and dying man. Nothing else will so protect you against the assaults of temptation, sustain you under the heavy pressure of adversity, enable you to "overcome evil with good," and perform your duty at the sacrifice of ease and interest, and popular favour. Nothing else can give you a victory over death and the grave, and fit you for the society of heaven, and fellowship with God. Embrace it —surrender your souls to its influence—and it will sustain and comfort you under all the toils and sorrows of your mortal pilgrimage, and conduct you to mansions of everlasting glory.

SERMON CCCCXCVIII.

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THE INIQUITY OF GIBEAH.

"They have deeply corrupted themselves as in the days of Gibeah: therefore he will remember their iniquities, he will visit their sin."—HOSEA ix. 9.

As an aged inhabitant of Gibeah was returning, on a certain evening from his work in the field to his dwelling in the city, he found a group of travellers resting in one of the streets, as if they could find no place of shelter. The group was composed of a man and a woman and a man-servant with a couple of asses laden with provisions for the wayfarers; and with straw and provender for the beasts. The old citizen upon enquiring whence they came, and whither they were going, learned that their home was on the side of Mount Ephraim; that they were returning thither from Bethlehem, the residence of the women's father; that they had passed by Jerusalem, because it was still in possession of the Jebusites, and preferred to spend the night at Gibeah, among their own nation.

The whole truth of the case was, that the man was a Levite, who had taken the woman, whose husband he is called, from Bethlehem to his house in Ephraim; that she had deserted him there and returned to her father; that after four months her husband sent for her, was reconciled, and was now with her on his way homeward; that they had stopped at Gibeah to lodge, but no one had, as yet, offered them a place of shelter, though private hospitality was, in those days, the only dependence of travellers.

The old man no sooner heard so much of their story as they chose to communicate, than he insisted upon their lodging at his own house, being especially moved in their favour by the fact that he himself had come from Mount Ephraim, and was but a sojourner in Gibeah. His generous salutation was, "Peace be with thee; howsoever, let all thy wants lie upon me, only lodge not in the street. So he brought him into the house and gave provender unto the asses, and they washed their feet, and did eat and drink."

But whilst they were refreshing themselves at this friendly dwelling, the house was beset by a crowd of brutal men, whose outrages surpassed the enormity of common crimes, and terminated in leaving the woman a corpse at the door.

Whatever may have been her character, or that of her husband, the guilt of the ruffians could not be palliated. The Levite felt the case so aggravated that nothing less than an appeal to the whole nation could meet the enormity of the offence. Nothing indeed could repair his wrongs; but he felt as a Jew, that unparalleled disgrace had fallen upon the nation through the act of these Benjamites of Gibeah, and that the whole people were concerned in vindicating the demands of justice. "They have committed lewdness and folly IN ISRAEL," was the Levite's complaint; and adopting a method of appeal which the feelings of the age allowed, he sent to each of the tribes a bloody fragment of the woman's corpse, as at once evidence of the deed, and a call for their counsel. "And it was so that all that saw it, said: There was no such deed done nor seen from the days that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt, until this day; consider of it, take advice and speak your minds."

Four hundred thousand men soon assembled, from all the tribes in Mizpeh. The Levite told them his story, and called upon them as Israelites, for advice. The indignant multitude, as with one heart, resolved to proceed at once against the guilty town. They did so; but not wishing to involve the innocent, they first called upon the tribe of Benjamin (to which Gibeah belonged), to deliver up the persons guilty of the deed of violence and murder. But the tribe instead of yielding to so just and fraternal a demand, espoused the cause of the murderers and flocked to Gibeah, not only to resist, but to attack the army of Israel. Two battles were fought, in both of which the Benjamites prevailed, and with a dreadful slaughter of the other tribes. This surprising result was probably permitted to correct the feelings of revenge and the spirit of self-confidence with which the tribes had gone into the war. For after the two defeats, they humbled themselves before God with weeping, and fasting, and sacrifices. They were now more likely to feel that it was not as avengers of their own quarrel but as instruments of Divine justice—not by the might of their superior numbers, but by the strength of God, that they were to purge the land from the iniquity of Gibeah. The city was for the third time attacked. It was now taken and burned, and so small a remnant of the Benjamites escaped, that the tribes turned from the melancholy victory to weep before the tabernacle of God, and cry, "O Lord God of Israel why is this come to pass in Israel, that there should be to-day one tribe lacking in Israel!"

This is a specimen of the character of the people of Gibeah

who are referred to in the text; and again in the next chapter, where Hosea exclaims, "O Israel, thou hast sinned from the days of Gibeah: there they stood, the battle of Gibeah against the children of iniquity did not overtake them." I call it a specimen of their character, for it would be contrary to all history and analogy, to suppose that this occurrence was a sudden outbreak of crime in a community that had until that period been moral and peaceful. Fully set in them to do evil as the hearts of men are, their passions do not venture to burst through the restraints of decent concealment, until they have reason to know that the moral sense of the community will overlook or endure their crimes. The history in fact shows this to have been the case in Gibeah; and the prophet speaks of the "deep corruption" of those days, as if it were characteristic of the people, whom he calls "the children of iniquity." Their infamy had reached to the time of Hosea, a period of at least six hundred and fifty years from the occurrences, which have been related; it has come to our knowledge twenty-six years later; it is part of the record which is given by inspiration of God for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness, and therefore it behoves us to revive and apply its lessons for our own benefit. The times in which we live seem to make this example peculiarly appropriate; and I shall therefore occupy the remainder of this discourse in an attempt to secure this advantage.

I. It presents a general warning in reference to the corruption of public morals.

We can imagine what must have been the state of morals in Gibeah—a city of sufficient size to furnish seven hundred chosen men of war—when the dwelling of a citizen could be beset by a licentious mob with all the tumult of a riot, and the ruffians allowed to accomplish their purposes without a hand raised to punish them, or defend the helpless strangers. This is partly to be attributed to the absence of any civil authority; for, says the historian, "in those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes."—(Judges xxi. 25.) But had not the public mind been dead to the commonest sentiment of hospitality, honour and virtue, such an outrage could not have been plotted, or been suffered to be perpetrated through several hours of disorder, closing in murder.

All that is wanting in any community to open the gates of vice, is to withhold the penalty of justice from offenders, and to relax, the restraints of a pure public sentiment. Let intemperance, for instance, be connived at by the laws, let drunkenness be made a matter of sport, let the opportunities and means of intoxication be multiplied by legislators, or the public functionaries, and let the public themselves esteem intemperate habits as no disqualification for stations of trust and honour, or for the alliances of life—and

nothing more is wanting to secure the triumph of this corruption.

The same thing is true of all other forms of licentiousness—even of that which has given infamy to the name of Gibeah. We need not expunge the seventh commandment from the decalogue, in order to give a license, to these transgressions. Satan has more art than to suggest such a measure. But let the moral sense of the public allow, under the name of fashion or custom, manners from which even the modesty of nature would shrink; let our dwellings be open to receive publications which minister to an impure curiosity, pollute the mind, and accustom it to criminal recitals, let our children find this kind of entertainment in the newspapers we read and the books we buy; let us be careless as to the associates whom we encourage for ourselves or those within our control; and when great crimes occur let us treat the parties to them as heroes and heroines, attributing their vices to imprudence, or even to their very innocence—by such means as these the corrruption of the public morals is sooner secured than if a reward were offered for vice.

If we in this country,—we who live in the large cities or on the great thoroughfares which make accessible to us all the sources of corruption, domestic and foreign, which our large cities attract—if we are in any such danger, let us take timely warning by examples like that of Gibeah. Who shall set bounds to the growth of corruption when it is once suffered to take root? How easy is prevention! how hard is reformation! The authors of the crime recorded in the history before us are called "Sons of Belial." The race is not extinct; and the imagination of Milton, in depicting the fiend himself, has struck upon the most characteristic marks of these corrupters of society:—

> "A fairer person lost not Heav'n; he seem'd
> For dignity compos'd and high exploit;
> But all was false and hollow; though his tongue
> Dropt manna, and could make the worse appear
> The better reason, to perplex and dash
> Maturest counsels: for his thoughts were low;
> To vice industrious, but to noble deeds
> Timorous and slothful; yet he pleased the ear."

II. The example of Gibeah shows that a corrupt state of morals is adapted to produce the most flagrant crimes.

The prevailing licentiousness was not satisfied with the secret pursuit of its objects. When the general standard of morality discountenances corrupt manners, the wicked adopt obscure and silent means of accomplishing their ends. Darkness and secrecy veil their habits from observation. But when, as in Gibeah, vice has become to some extent common, and fears no disgrace, it will become bold, both in its excesses and in its publicity. The history of the world

is full of similar examples. We need not go far back, or far off, to find proof that this is the natural course of all sin. Licentiousness, assassination and suicide still hold intimate fellowship. A relaxation of moral principle cannot be confined to one particular. When the fear of God is thrown off as to one indulgence, what motive is left strong enough to restrain the corrupt heart from other crimes to which it is tempted. The bonds of religion and of society are rotted by such corruption, and can no longer serve either for union or restraint. Let the principles of common integrity, for example, become relaxed; let men adopt the idea that there is no obligation as to their contracts and debts, if their responsibility can be evaded by legal forms; let this idea be adopted by governments, and the contracts of a commonwealth be anulled by statute, and its creditors be defrauded by law, and a blow is struck at the very foundation of right and honesty, the result of which will soon be perceived in the general imbecility of moral principle in the community which sanctions or abides by such laws. Who can contemplate without amazement and shame the state of morals in our own country in this respect compared with what it was before the late financial revolution disclosed the corruption that had been secretly spreading throughout our whole community? And who is not conscious that the discovery has tended to encourage the evil, and blunt our sensibilities to its enormity?

III. The case of Gibeah furnishes a forcible illustration of the danger of giving any manner of countenance to iniquity.

The Benjamites, though the crime at Gibeah was so notorious, took no steps to punish the trangressors. When the other tribes appealed to Benjamin and asked, as by the polity and customs of the nation they had a right to do, that the offenders should be delivered to them for punishment, they refused; and not only refused either to bring them to punishment themselves or to yield them up as public criminals, but immediately took measures to oppose the army of the nation by force. Thus they avowed the cause of the authors of the iniquity, and practically sanctioned their conduct. Thus they afford another exemplification of the extent to which moral corruption will carry a community. First, the citizens of Gibeah allow the violence and riot to proceed throughout a whole night unchecked; then the crime is passed by with impunity; and finally the whole tribe to which Gibeah belonged espouse the part of the murderers, and commence a civil war for their protection.

The first step was wrong, and therefore all that followed was wrong. The admonition which we ought to receive is of the sin and danger of allowing protection to any iniquity. Communities may furnish this protection, not only by openly espousing the cause of the violators of law, and forcibly rescuing them from punishment, but also by approving their course, exciting a clamor in their behalf, and expressing such a sympathy for the criminal as absorbs the regard due to justice and to the whole interests of the community; and above all, due to the holiness of God and his condemnation of all sin.

Civil society is founded for the protection of all its members. The administration of justice is consigned by common consent to the public tribunals; and the laws which these tribunals administer are those which the society has adopted as their compact and bond of union. Now this bond is as nothing unless the community which have thus associated themselves, submit to the dominion of their own laws, and sustain their impartial execution, so long as they remain their laws. They may change them in a constitutional manner; but so long as they exist every member of the body politic is under the most sacred obligation to obey and uphold them. They are the laws—not of the judges and juries and executive—but the laws of the people, and these others are but their servants to apply them. He therefore cannot be a faithful citizen who attempts either to violate the law himself, or prevent its just administration towards others.

The laws under which we live are so humane that no exception from this principle is admissible on the ground that the circumstances of a crime often demand the exercise of mercy. This may be true. But the laws provide for such cases; and even mercy should be granted legally and not commanded or compelled by violence. The trial by jury, the gradation of punishment, the prerogative of pardon vested in the Executive, are the legal provision for the adjudication of the penalty of transgressions. If it is an outrage on all law and authority for individuals to redress their own wrongs, or those of the public, by violence, without the trial of the criminal, it is no less an offence to screen a criminal from the operation of the law, or to rejoice in his escape.

We are guilty of encouraging iniquity when we justify crimes on the ground of the temptations and provocations which led to them. No good law allows such grounds of justification; though they may be admitted to qualify the heinousness of the offence. The desperation of hunger may drive a man to robbery. The law will not hold him guiltless on this account; but it will mitigate his punishment, and vidicate its own purity, even if by no more than a nominal infliction. So the heat of passion may impel a man to take the life of another without previous deliberation. But though this characteristic of his offence may exempt him from the fate of the wilful murderer, it requires the severe punishment of the homicide in another form. For the law is established on the very ground that the injuries men may receive are not to be avenged by their own hands, but by the calm and just adjudication of the laws which they themselves framed or have voluntarily submitted to. If therefore a man is injured, in person or property or reputation, he may not retaliate, or use voilence to recover his rights, or redress his injuries, but he must seek his rights or redress in the way which he solemnly agreed to employ when he entered into the social compact; and if it should happen that the law is defective in the particular point of his wrong, he must abide the consequences of the oversight—he is bound to abstain from any private force to obtain his end. Once admit the principle that temptations or provocations, however great and extraordinary, authorize a man to avenge his own wrongs,

and we take away the corner-stone of justice and of civilization; we dissolve the compact, and put the community into the disorganized condition of savage life, where every man is his own judge, and the only law is force.

If we should admit such a principle, where could we draw the line between what is criminal and what is justifiable? What great crimes are ever committed without temptation or provocation? Revenge, covetousness, jealousy, and lust, are the sources of nearly all the enormous crimes that bring men to the gibbet or to the prison. But are not all these founded in the strongest influences of temptation and provocation? How shall we distinguish between the degrees of strength with which these dispositions impel a man to sin? How can we feel safe in determining that the passion which urged one man to commit an enormous crime was not so strong or so natural as that which impelled another to avenge it!

No! we may sympathize with the injured, and have our indignation aroused against the wrong-doer; but we must say to the sufferer—Your hand is not the proper instrument to redress the wrong; the sin of another against you will not justify your sin against him, against the law of the land, and against God; and if as a Christian you will not forgive, and if as a good citizen you feel obliged to bring the offender to justice, you should take those steps which the laws prescribe for your guidance. We must sympathize with the laws, and with our families and society at large, which depend on their protection, as with the injured party. The Benjamites had great sympathy for the murderers whom justice demanded, but they had none for the man whose wife had been savagely destroyed, nor for the aged citizen who had showed them hospitality, and participated in their injuries.

It is to the withholding of public justice that we may in part attribute the growing disposition to seek revenge without invoking the arm of justice. Let the penalties of the law be withheld, and the temptation to acts of private retaliation become greatly increased. Had not the Levite placed so much confidence in his nation, he might naturally have preferred to become the incendiary of Gibeah, rather than submit his wrongs to the redress of a national council.

And if these principles are just as to the punishment of ordinary offences, they much more forcibly apply to those which aim at the life of one who had injured us. A man is deeply injured in his reputation or his feelings, by the misconduct of another. But upon what principle of right or morals that can claim the sanction of God's Word, or human legislation, is the injured man himself authorized to take the life of the offender by assassination, or required to meet him in combat with deadly weapons? And upon what ground shall we justify ourselves, if, by our approbation, we sanction this course, and seek to screen the self-avenger from punishment—or what is equivalent, desire and rejoice in his escape from it? The laws of God and our country coincide in these points—first, that no man in the social state is per-

mitted to avenge his wrongs;—whoever wrongs another is amenable to the laws which provide the means of punishment and compensation, so far as any human power can afford them;—and second, that no man has a right to take the life of another save through absolute necessity, in defence of himself, or those naturally committed to his care; but that the prerogative of taking life, as a penalty for crime, is to be the deliberate and solemn act of public justice. When the taking of life is excused, it is where it is done to prevent the execution of a wicked purpose and not where it is done in vengeance for a crime already committed. From the rule of these principles no sane man is exempted. No provocation however strong, can justify in the view of Divine law, or any human law that profess to regard the Divine as supreme, the exercise of personal vengeance; and the community that ventures to say of this or that duel or assassination it was right because one party had a great provocation, participates in the same kind of sin as that which brought destruction on the Benjamites.

The great mistake into which a community are apt to fall on such occasions, is in not distinguishing between what is really deserved by the wretch who has excited their indignation, and the lawful methods of inflicting what he deserves. We are apt to overlook the departure from justice in the mode of administering it, through the consciousness that the guilty person has received nothing but what his crimes merited. Thus when mobs have undertaken to expel gamblers from a village by force, or when notorious and savage offenders have been in that way seized and punished, even with death, the abhorrence which the unlawful acts of the mob ought to excite seems often to be displaced by the satisfaction that society has been, by any means, rid of such pests. So we are in danger of nullifying law and justice, in their only right and safe administration, when we are disposed to account a man blameless because he has stepped forth in advance of, and in place of the law, and by a summary act of his own private vengeance, ridden the world of a villain. But this is all wrong. It is a confounding of justice and revenge, and an apology for evil because it promises to be productive of good.

The effects of such sentiments in encouraging violence, in making a criminal the object of public sympathy, in degrading the laws and relaxing the securities of society, are too obvious to require detail. It is equally evident that they are sins against God, whose law is the foundation of ours; who requires of us as a Christian duty, to submit to this authority as ordained by Him as a terror to the evil, and who forbids us to be partakers of other men's sins. The great question in every such case is, who is the authorized avenger of the wrong? Do the law of God or of man say, that the next of kin or of friendship is entitled to redress the injury inflicted? Does either of those laws say a man may take with his own hands the life of one who has done him an injury, however great that injury be? If there be no such law in the Bible or in the statute-book, then no man can claim to be acquitted who exercises such an authority; and the public sentiment

that sustains him must be wrong, though it may be benevolent. The provocation may have been great, and this should have its due weight in the gradation of his crime; but it cannot make him innocent. What provocation could be greater than that which Absalom had towards Ammon, whom he put to death in revenge of a wrong to his own sister? But for that offence he was banished from the presence of the king, his father; and though indulged, after several years, with a pardon, through the parental favor of the monarch, it was not long before a more impartial and higher hand exhibited the fratricide in the position of a murderer on the tree—as if God would compel men to enforce his precept, "who so sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." I know that those who vindicate these opinions in our day, are sometimes denounced as sanguinary, and as exhibiting a spirit very opposite to that of the gospel. We are told that the world has grown wiser and more humane since the days in which God declared, "Ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death;" and history records the act of a monarch who was bold enough to introduce an edict remitting the penalty of murder by a preamble stating his purpose to "moderate the rigor of the Divine law."* But I tremble at this additional evidence of a perverted public sentiment, when it says in opposition to what God has said—this shall not be so. I of course include in these remarks those only who reject the divine statute on the grounds which I have mentioned, and not those who conscientiously, but as I believe erroneously, suppose that this was not intended to be a universal and perpetual requirement. And as to all that has been said under this head, lest it should be supposed that any particular cases are exclusively in view, I must add, that however seasonable such cases make this course of remark, reference is had to a state of public sentiment which has obviously been increasing for several years in our country, and the tendency of which is to excuse men, individually, or in mobs, in their resorts to violence to redress injuries for which the common processes of law are supposed to be too tardy and too uncertain, or their penalties too light.

IV. The fate of the Benjamites warns us of the sure consequences of iniquity. "They have deeply corrupted themselves, as in the days of Gibeah; therefore he will remember their iniquity, he will visit their sins."

The destruction of such a multitude of persons as were involved in the ruin of Gibeah, is, as we have seen, not to be attributed to the single crime against the stranger from Ephraim, but to the general corruption of the people which only developed itself in that act and in the protection which was given to it by the whole tribe.

If it were necessary to offer any suggestion in vindication of any of the Divine judgments, it might be asserted and proved from history, both sacred and common, that such corruption as was manifested

* See Blackstone's Commentaries, iv: 194.

there, when it attains to this height, can only be removed by extirpation. The appeals of truth, the threatenings of the law of God or man, do not reach the hearts of men who, in opposition to all their knowledge and consciousness, sink themselves in pollution, and relax the commonest restraints of morality. It was mercy to the world that has exterminated, from time to time, a corruption which would have spread and perpetuated itself like a leprosy, and have brought the race to an end. It was mercy to mankind—mercy to us—that rolled the deluge over the earth, that sent fire from the clouds upon the cities of the plain, and that destroyed a tribe of Israel. Had not Benjamin been cut off, the whole nation might have perished in the same corruption. The New Testament repeatedly assures us that these events are recorded for "our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted," nor "tempt Christ as some of them also tempted," for "all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition; wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." Again, referring to the fall of the angels, the flood, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the Scriptures say that these judgments made them an "ensample unto those that after should live ungodly." And it is worthy of our notice, that in this very passage, the apostle, after speaking of the filthy conversation of the wicked, and the unlawful deeds which vexed the soul of the righteous Lot, or called forth the rebukes of Noah, the "preacher of righteousness," applies the admonition directly to all impenitent evil-doers, as sure to meet their retribution at the day of judgment—"*but chiefly* them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and *despise governments*; presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities." And another apostle, making precisely the same reference to history, thus characterizes those in his own day who were provoking the same judgments—"these dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities."

Let us beware, then, of the results of sin; whether committed by ourselves, or connived at in others. Let us be careful that in contributing a share to the formation of public opinion, we hold no sentiments that are at variance with the Divine standard of holiness and truth; and that we never countenance sin in our own practice or by the approbation of it in others. And if no better motive shall deter us, let us fear to provoke the wrath of Heaven on ourselves and on our country. "He will remember iniquities, and visit sins." He is a God of grace and of love; of long-suffering and great patience, but He is a just and holy God. He will not endure iniquity; and if it is persisted in, encouraged and rejoiced in, He will, He must visit the offenders.

Although the tenor of this discourse is in some respects less evangelical than is usual, I cannot think that, if properly improved, its tendency can be otherwise than to make a deep impression on our minds of the corruption of our nature, the evil and danger of sin, and

the necessity of a Divine power to change our nature, rectify our errors, and furnish and apply a means of justification beyond our own capacity to provide. And it seems to me that I can, at the close of such a discourse, introduce the blessed name of CHRIST with peculiar appropriateness and emphasis. Turn from the scenes of violence and corruption that have been suggested to our minds by what has been said, and view the spotless Saviour, the holy, harmless, and undefiled Son of God! View Him in His love and mercy, as He came to live in such a world as this, and to die for such a race; to pardon such transgressions, and to provide the means of renewing and purifying such hearts! See the violence and blindness of our nature illustrated, in the conduct of those who nailed Him to a cross—but see in the streaming blood, and hear in His dying prayers, the means of atonement and intercession! Let the tendency of the world be what it may, let the days be approaching as fast as they may, when iniquity shall abound, and the love of many shall wax cold; when judgment is turned away backward and justice standeth afar off, because truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter—yes, let even the Divine forbearance cease and Heaven's judgments fall upon the earth; he that is in Christ shall fear no evil; in His righteousness shall he stand accepted, and His arm shall uphold him until he is safe beyond the reach of earthly corruption.

Make haste to secure this refuge. Come out, come out from among them, and be ye separate saith the Lord; and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

CHRISTIANS AND ANGELS.

The angels take the liveliest interest in matters pertaining to man's salvation; they are anxious spectators of the race which he is running—the guardian and ministering spirits of the heirs of salvation; and rejoice over every "sinner that repenteth" with a universal and a great rejoicing. What a rebuke is this to the dullness and apathy and neglect of too many Christians!

The angels in Heaven and Christians on earth, have one and the same great interest, and grand theme, to enlist and call forth their love and service. And hence they should have a fellow-feeling. The desire, the anxiety, the joy of angels ought to be the desire, the anxiety, the joy of every good man. Christians ought to look upon sinners with the pity of angels, yearn over them with the tenderness and solicitude of angels, and joy over their salvation with the joy of angels. Redemption should so awake our sensibilities, and sway such a power over our minds and hearts, that the sight of a fellow-sinner plucked from endless ruin and recovered to God and life, should give us the highest joy—thrill our being as nothing else can do. Earthly joy, earthly gain, earthly triumphs, what are they all worth in the scales of an immortal soul, made in the image of God—made for happiness, glory, and endless life—converted from the error of his ways and made an heir of glory? When all beneath the sun has been reduced to ashes, that soul will rise to God, resplendent in moral worth and beauty, and shine for ever in glory, as a star of the Redeemer's crown. The salvation of the meanest sinner that ever lived on earth, is worth all the treasures of tears and toil and blood, that the Christian church has ever poured out at the feet of Jesus.

Is this the feeling of Christians? Is concern for the sinner made the great concern of their hearts? Do their souls melt and rejoice over a repentant sinner with a celestial feeling? Have we as Christians adequate views of the worth of the soul; of the extent of the ruin which sin has brought upon it; and of the need and preciousness of its redemption? Is salvation the theme of themes with us? Does it set the heart on fire—inspire the tongue, nerve the soul, and command life's best and noblest service? Alas! must we not confess to an apathy here that is the grief and sorrow of angels? We do not fully enter into the spirit of the thrilling scenes which are transpiring in this apostate and gospel-world. We do not half feel for sinners who are perishing eternally on every hand—in our streets, in our sanctuaries, in our own dwellings. We do not wait and watch for the repentance of sinners, and pout out the full tide of the heart's gratitude and joy when any are found returning of give glory to God. We do not put our hears in living contact with the cross of Christ, and fully fellowship its sympathy and travail and agony and joy and glory in the blessed work of saving sinners. Oh, that we had the spirit of Christ—the spirit of angels! Then would one great thought—the rescuing of souls from sin and death—engross our minds, enlist every faculty and energy, and constrain a willing, undivided, untiring service for God and salvation.

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COMPARATIVE CLAIMS OF HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONS.*

"Thy Kingdom come."—LUKE 11 : 2.

THE kingdom of God is that new and spiritual dominion, which Divine grace establishes in the hearts of men. Its subjects are regenerated sinners. Once they were not under the spiritual dominion of God. They neither loved him, nor served him. "But they are washed, but they are sanctified, but they are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." A new dominion is set up in their hearts. They love God. They aim to do his will. And though extremely imperfect still, yet they are the subjects of the Prince of Peace, and shall be more and more conformed to his will, till finally, he shall present them before the throne of the Father spotless.

This kingdom of God is set up in the souls of men, through God's appointed means of grace, and the blessings of the Holy Spirit accompanying them. The Word of God, especially the word preached, the sacraments and prayer, are the main instrumentalities for the recovery of this revolted and miserable world to God.

In the text, we are instructed by the Saviour to pray for the coming of this kingdom in all the world. The very next petition is, "thy will be done as in heaven, so in earth."

The pious in every age *have* prayed for this. They have expected it. They "have seen the promises afar off, and been persuaded of them," and have known that the time is coming when Jesus Christ shall reign in the hearts of men; when every darkened nation shall have received light; when every hostile weapon

* Preached on the day of a collection for Home Missions.

shall be dashed to pieces; when the song of praise shall echo from the side of Atlas and tremble over the waves of Ganges; and when from every hill top and every valley the shout shall go up, one universal brotherhood of voices, "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ."

Effort, to more or less extent, has been put forth by the church to extend her light, and love, and influence, and bring men into this kingdom of God. Alas! that she has done so little! Generations have vanished out of her sight, borne on upon the mighty roll of turies into another and unseen world; while, it would seem, the church has never mustered her strength as she ought, and laid down her offerings on the altar of God, and proved the power of prayer, and never expected as she ought to prepare these dying generations of men to stand before God!—But she has done something. Duty in this respect is no longer a secret. The precept and the promise are now too plain for any lingering doubt with an intelligent Christian; and the wailing eternity of dying millions, borne on every breeze that sweeps round the world, falls on the hearts of thousands of believers, as the voice of the Master calling on us to pity and save the poor! We hear this beseeching cry. We heed it. It affects our hearts to think what millions of men are dying and unfit to die; and have no means to save them; and the last words they utter are moanings of dreadful despair! These are not times for inactivity; and this morning we are going to make the annual contribution for the cause of Missions in our country.

This one cause, in the opinion of him who speaks to you, is second now to none other in the arguments it presents for your liberal contributions. In the same opinion it is more overlooked, in proportion to its real importance and the propriety of its receiving support, than any other of the prominent objects, which solicit your aid and receive it from month to month.

We are going to present to you some considerations on this subject. Our object is not so much to give you counsel, or give direction to your charities, or even to give you instruction, as it is to induce you to think and decide for yourselves. "I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say."

I. The different modes in which good people strive to advance the Redeemer's kingdom ought to be maturely considered:—

When benevolent men are solicited in behalf of different objects, and all good ones, they usually, if not always, find themselves unable to bestow as much as they would be glad to have it in their power to do. They cannot do everything. Their Lord has not given them the means. He has kept some of them in very narrow circumstances, perhaps for the very purpose of having them exercise a more severe industry, and a more careful economy, and a more constant and virtuous self-denial, in order to be able to extend a helping hand to those who are in want. Others

are not so straitened; but then, there are many ways of doing good—they are all costly—and the most favored are obliged to portion out their liberality, not according to what is needed for the evangelization of the world, but according to what they have the ability and the heart to give. And therefore it becomes necessary to compare one object with another, one way of doing good with another, and come to a conclusion, *how much* of that which they have to bestow shall be appropriated to one object or way of doing good, and how much shall be appropriated to another. They *must* do this. They cannot avoid it. It arises from the necessity of the case. Not an intelligent and kindhearted believer in all Christendom is able, whatever be his wealth, to bestow upon objects he approves, as much as he would be glad to give. Every benevolent man who is accustomed to this benevolence at all *does* do this. He does it in every instance of benefaction. He gives much or little according to his ability and benevolence, and according as the matter before him appears to him more or less important at the time. And more: every man who gives anything *ought* to do this. He ought not to avoid it if he could. He ought in the exercise of a sound discretion, to make such a use of what he has to bestow for the establishment of the kingdom of God, as shall do most good. He ought by no means to act blindly. If he does, his benefactions may fail of the good they might do, not only, but they may do positive injury to the very cause he loves and attempts to aid. For it is by no means to be questioned, that, under the influence of misguided men, matters are brought up, which present an appearance of propriety, and whose advocates plead strongly for them, and ask for much liberality in their behalf; when, in reality, every penny bestowed upon them is worse than flung away. So that a sound and careful discretion—a discrimination in reference to the nature of the calls that are made upon our liberality, is one of our incumbent and important duties, as Christians and as men.

And these ideas are enough to show us, in what regard we are to hold that declaration, which we hear from so many amiable people, that one religious object ought not to be compared with another. The declaration is false. It is utterly unrighteous and un-Protestant. One object ought to be compared with another. As Christians, as men of duty and good morals, we are bound to do the most good we can, with the means we have to employ. This must be our intention, or we have not a righteous one. We have no right to squander our means, or employ them to do a less good, when they might do a greater, in any case wherein we are left to be governed by our own mind. Our mind should be a wise and righteous mind. If we were not *Protestants*—if we had given up our moral principles and feelings to the control of some ghostly conscience-keeper, then indeed we might consistently bestow without discrimination, and trust *him* to direct our bounty, whom we had

already entrusted to keep our conscience. But, as those who are under the Bible and not under an "Apostolical succession," falsely so called—as those who expect to give account each one for himself unto God, it becomes us to look wisely at the objects which solicit our charities, to compare one object with another, and do the most good we can with the means put into our hands. There can be nothing wrong in our asking *advice* of those better informed than ourselves, of ministers, or any body else. But as far as possible, "let every man be fully persuaded in his *own* mind." And let not the common people take every thing upon trust, and leave it to ministers to appropriate their benefactions and manage them as they will. Ministers are generally bad financiers; and if they had wisdom enough, I am afraid they would not long have grace enough, to manage justly the benevolence of the church, if left to their own will.

Let it not, then, be said among Protestants and Bible Christians —among those who keep their own conscience, that one religious object is not to be compared with another. You do make this comparison: you ought to make it: if you give anything you cannot avoid making it, except by the un-Protestant device of committing your conscience in benevolence to the keeping of somebody else.

II. It seems to us that there is reason to believe that peculiar circumstances have led the people of this country to overlook too much the object before us.

The objects you patronize here from month to month, are all good. They all have the same great object in view,—to set up on earth the kingdom of God. None of them could properly be passed over. We need the Bible Society—the Tract Society—the Sunday School and Seamen's Cause—the Education Society—Home and Foreign Missions. In no one of these is there any such pre-eminence as to give it a claim, from its own nature, superior to the claims of others.

A claim of precedence or superiority has sometimes been advanced for the Bible Society, and has been pleaded in the ears of multitudes; just as if there were no room to question, but that cause is more important than any other not only, but just as if the heaviest part of our different donations should certainly be devoted to that cause. But we can easily conceive, that other matters, *necessary* for the world's conversion, may cost more than it would cost to give a Bible to every inhabitant of the globe. If such a gift were all, the work would soon and easily be done. We can easily conceive also, that whole nations of men may be in such a state of ignorance and degradation and irreligion, that you would do them more good by giving them Tracts which they would read, than the Bible which they would neglect. Some cautious judgment, therefore, is needful—some discrimination—some comparing one mode of doing good with another. A Bible is not so costly a thing as a minister. It needs not like him, daily "bread to eat and raiment to

put on." And often, even with the most constant use, it will last longer; and as ministers wear out and die off, others must be educated to take their places.

The pre-eminence in importance and in just claim for the largest patronage has been often set up in behalf of Foreign Missions. We are *not going to say* that Foreign Missions does not deserve this regard. But before we have done (if you give attention to what we shall say, you will find some reasons for not assenting to that idea, without some careful thinking on the subject. It is certainly true, that at present, the benevolent people of our congregations bestow more upon the cause of Foreign Missions than upon any of its sister Institutions. They may be right. Perhaps they would continue to do the same thing if they should examine as extensively into the operations and promises of these institutions, as they are capable of doing. And yet, it may be, that peculiar circumstances, and not wholly a sound and just judgment, have mainly given such a direction to their charities. We think it most certain, that the benevolent of this favored country have not done too much for sending the gospel to other and heathen nations. Would they had done more! Would that they would come up to the measure of duty and do it now! And when we compare Foreign Mission with Home Mission enterprise, let us not be understood as desiring to *divert* from the former a single fraction for the purpose of turning it into the channel of the home department. But looking at the extensive action for evangelizing the heathen, and commending all that has been done, let us take that as an argument and stimulus and encouragement for doing more than we have done yet, for our own country and our own kindred.

I have before me the accounts of the annual receipts for Domestic and Foreign Missions, of those great Institutions which it pleases you to employ to dispense your bounty; I mean the Boards of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church on the one hand, and the American Home Missionary Society and American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions on the other. I ask your attention for a moment, first, to the comparative amounts given to the *General Assembly's* Boards of Foreign and Home Missions.

In 1848	Foreign	Missions	received	$108,586.	Home	Missions,	$61,922.
In 1847	"	"	"	93,679.	"	"	56,522.
In 1846	"	"	"	84,564.	"	"	52,800.
In 1845	"	"	"	84,513.	"	"	50,000.
In 1844	"	"	"	63,663.	"	"	41,000.
In 1843	"	"	"	54,308.	"	"	32,126.
In 1842	"	"	"	57,909.	"	"	34,463.
In 1841	"	"	"	63,743,	"	"	33,522.
In 1840	"	"	"	54,644.	"	"	39,220.
In 1839	"	"	"	55,566.	"	"	39,412.

This is going back far enough to show the general feelings of the patrons of these Boards, and almost back to the commencement

of the separate action of the General Assembly's Board of Foreign Missions. Under the General Assembly, then, for the last *ten* years,

Foreign Missions have received $721,175
Home Missions have received 448,987

So that through these channels $280,188 *more* have been given for Foreign than for Home Missions, in the last ten years.

Next, we ask your attention to a similar comparison between the amounts bestowed for the same purposes into the Treasuries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and the American Home Missionary Society.

In 1848	Foreign	Missions	received	$254,056.	Home	Missions,	$140,197.
In 1847	"	"	"	211,402.	"	"	116,717.
In 1846	"	"	"	262,073.	"	"	125,124.
In 1845	"	"	"	255,112.	"	"	121,946.
In 1844	"	"	"	236,394.	"	"	101,904.
In 1843	"	"	"	244,224.	"	"	99,812.
In 1842	"	"	"	318,396.	"	"	92,463.
In 1841	"	"	"	335,189.	"	"	85,413.
In 1840	"	"	"	241,691.	"	"	78,345.
In 1839	"	"	"	244,169.	"	"	82,564.

Through these channels, then, for the last *ten* years,
Foreign Missions have received $2,502,706
Home Missions have received 1,044,485

So that through these channels $1,428,221 *more* have been given for Foreign than for Home Missions in the last ten years. Of the whole amount given to those Institutions, Home Missions have not received *one-third*.

And this comparative amount seems to be a kind of established rule. If we extend the comparison back to the year 1827, (the date of the first Report of the American Home Missionary Society,) the result will not be very essentially altered. The joint income of these two Institutions since that period, has amounted to $5,991,909. Of this sum the American Home Missionary Society has received $1,751,327, *not one-third of the amount.*

Now this may be all right, if we have no more to give. We are not complaining of it. But we are very sure that *Home* Missions deserve a more efficient patronage. Due self-denial—due Christian love for souls—a large measure of the spirit of her Lord and Master, would soon enable the church of this country to give the ministry of the gospel to every human being that breathes the air.

And if we have no more to give, or if we are not going to increase our benefactions to a vast extent, it becomes us most seriously to consider whether we are *not* bestowing too large a portion of our benevolence upon a foreign and uncertain field, while we are too much neglecting a more promising field at home.

As we consider these two objects, (Foreign and Home Missions,) we ought, indeed, to remember that they rather contrast, than compare with one another. Look at some of the items.

Allahabad and Bombay, China and Ceylon, are farther off than Indiana and Illinois and Iowa; and it costs more to send and sustain a Missionary on the other side of the globe, than just in our neighborhood.

At home, the cost of ordinary school education is not defrayed from Mission Funds; but in foreign lands it must be, or children must be left to grow up in ignorance of letters to a vast extent, or be taught heathenism along with all the erudition they attain.

The printing of Bibles and other books of education and religion for our own country, does not devolve upon Home Missionary Institutions; while, for the heathen, much of this comes under the head of Foreign Missions, so called.

To a great extent, buildings for schools and seminaries, as well as church edifices, must be erected from Foreign Mission funds; but Home Mission Institutions are not called upon for any of this expenditure.

These are some of the items. It should be remembered, therefore, that Home and Foreign Missions do not exactly compare with one another. For our own country we do many things under other names, which for heathen lands, are of necessity embraced under the name of expenditures for Foreign Missions. And hence, when the comparative amounts of expense look strange to us, it becomes us to consider carefully the different objects they have in view, before we conclude that our charity is too diffusive.

But it is not at all strange, if the attention of the benevolent has been too little directed to our own land. We name to you some of the things which have tended to produce such a result.

The people of God slept too long over the subject of the world's evangelization. And when their attention was once aroused to the subject, and they saw on the wide map of nations, country after country, with all their untold population, in deep darkness, in idolatry and awful degradation and misery; it is no wonder that the object of saving the long neglected nations should have almost entirely absorbed their attention and their charities.

That object was new to them. It is not now old. The Foreign Board commenced in 1810. One of its first Missionaries was a schoolmate of my own. Things that *can* interest the human mind often have a power of interest by reason of their novelty, which they could not have without it. Home Missions was no novelty. The General Assembly commenced that work in 1789: the New York Missionary Society was instituted in 1796: the Connecticut Missionary Society in 1798: the Massachusetts Missionary Society in 1799: and the New Jersey Missionary Society in 1801. And it is not to be wondered at, that

attention and liberality should have been, and should still be inclined to follow the impulses of novelty, and overlook too much the old field of work.

As the enterprise of Foreign Missions began to be prosecuted, the people of God were astonished at what they discovered. They were amazed to find Divine Providence preparing the way so rapidly for the spread of Christianity. Nation after nation was flung open to the gospel. Barriers were broken down. Obstacles were lifted out of the way. The whole world seemed almost ready to woo the advent and welcome the footsteps of the Christian Missionary. This seemed like the direct pointing of the finger of God. Men thought it so—called it so—and eager eyes were looking to see the rising beams of the Millennial glory. And it is no wonder, if the opened and waiting nations now unexpectedly ready to receive the gospel, should have led the benevolent people of this country too much to forget the wants of their own land.

It is very natural that our attention, zeal and vigor of effort should correspond to the deemed magnitude of the work we have to perform. Beyond the oceans lay an opened world. Not one country, but nine-tenths of the globe's population lay out on the vision of the awaking church, as the field of her appropriate work for setting up the kingdom of God. These old nations were full of people. Their population was told on the startled ear of the listening Christian, by tens and hundreds of millions! The church was astonished at the magnitude of the work before her. It is by no means surprising, that those accustomed to pray—"thy kingdom come," should have lent their attention to a darkened world and its dying millions, and should greatly have overlooked less imposing work which lay nearer by.

There may be some romance in religious achievements as well as in any other. Few of us, perhaps, are actuated simply by cool wisdom, conscience and truth, aside from any mixture of more impassioned emotions. We seem quite as likely to be influenced by those spirit-stirring appeals wherein magnificence figures, and gives a new and strange energy to hope; as by the more humble and plain and not less important, though less imposing duties, of which it cannot be said,

"'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view."

In respect to the mighty work of *regenerating a world*, the church has heard every possible and stirring appeal. The changes have been rung on the moral dignity of the enterprise—the vastness of the work—the duty and privilege of doing it. "The field is the world." Deep darkness hangs over dying millions on the other side of the globe. They are rushing to eternity without ever having heard a sermon. The hope was waked into exercise, that before another generation of mankind should have gone down to

the grave, the grand and glorious object might be accomplished, of publishing Christ and pardon and immortal life to every living man. These are great ideas. They wake deep emotions. They seem to fall in with the expanding and brotherhood principles of the gospel. They have great and Christ-like truths in them. This is not to be denied. And while the emotions they excited have been living in all their freshness in thousands of benevolent hearts, who can wonder and who can blame us, if we have, while thinking to redeem a world, partially lost sight of the smaller and less romantic duties, which lay nearer home? Who can wonder, if piety has sometimes regarded the conversion of a heathen soul as something *far more* done for Christ, than the conversion of a soul in our own land?

To a believer—to every sensible man—there is something exceedingly exciting in the horrid and bloody practices of heathen religion. Such religion is degrading and cruel. Men leave their aged parents to starve in some untrodden wild, and be devoured by the wild beasts of the desert! Mothers bury their children alive! Frantic devotees fling themselves before the idol's car, and it is drawn on by the frenzied multitude, its victim crushed, and its wheels dripping with human blood. These things have amazed and aroused us. They ought to have done so. As Christians and as men, we ought to have felt them. But there are no such excitements to wake our interests for the souls cut off from the gospel in the new settlements of our own West—without a minister—without a Bible—and just as really needing our pity, charity and prayers for their salvation, as the worshipers of Brahmah, Boodh, or Vishnoo. And hence, excited by the foreign tale, (which no man could hear without emotion,) it is not wonderful if our feelings of Christian compassion have led us too much to overlook the unblest souls of our own country.

These are some of the causes which have been operating and are operating still. We have not done too much for the heathen, or felt too much, or prayed too much for distant and darkened nations. But we have felt and prayed and done *too little* for the destitute in our own land. If we shall do so much for other countries, shall we not at least do *as* much for our own?

III. And therefore, if we have sufficiently accounted for our neglect, and mentioned the best apologies that can be made for it, let us direct your attention to some of the matters which seem to us to deserve your special regard, as you would learn the measure of your duty towards Missions at home. We select eight ideas out of a multitude that occur to us.

1. The people in the destitute settlements of our country, (mostly in the newer States and the Territories,) are of our own nation and blood. They are our fellow-citizens, our brothers, sisters, and children. The gospel is not selfish to limit our benevolence to our own family and nation; but the gospel *is* wise and

orderly, and sometimes puts us to do one work sooner than another. Both works may be equally *good*, but both may not be equally *ours*. Duty, wisdom, gospel, all demand of us to find our own. That must be first done, and done alone, if we have ability to do no other. "If any man provide not for his own, and specially for his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." On this principle, those in our own land, destitute of the gospel, become our own and our first work.

The father of a family must provide for his own, because they are his, and because if he does not, nobody else will. If he neglects that, for the purpose of providing for others whom he may pity, he has utterly mistaken his duty. He may talk what he will, of the expansive and unselfish spirit of the gospel, but he ought to know that it is expansive by order and righteousness and proportion, and not by the dictates of caprice, by pride, or romance, or the dreams of an infidel socialism. The unevangelized souls of our wide West are connected with us by blood, by nation, by all that belongs to civil government, science, arts, and the common interests of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." If we would provide for the perpetuity of our beloved Republic it becomes us to provide for their intelligence and virtue.

Republicanism, freedom, cannot last long in our country, if ignorance, superstition and vice are permitted to sway the destinies of our empire. That intelligence and virtue needful for the perpetuity of our valued institutions and happiness, never can be secured by anything but the gospel, and the gospel in its Protestant purity. Lord Brougham was right, both honest and right, when he said in the British Parliament, that for whatever of freedom England enjoyed under her present institutions, she was indebted for it to the influence of the Puritans. *They* were the men who withstood the onsets of tyranny. They were men *fit* to be the guardians of the ark of liberty, because they were men of God. Mustered on the high places of the field, they carried their Bibles in their knapsacks. They were men of conscience and prayer. And surely we are as much indebted to their firmness and virtue, as that noble lord maintained England was. We want their piety in the West—their intelligence, virtue, and firmness. We want more Missionaries of the gospel there. If *we* do not aid that growing and needy population, nobody else will. They depend on us. Neither Scotland nor England will send them Missionaries. It is not so with the foreign heathen. England looks on China, *not* always to butcher her citizens in unrighteous war waged to compel the reception of her pernicious opium, nor always to extort, in robbery, millions of money at the cannon's mouth! There is another class of men in England.—There is piety there; and that piety is embarked throughout the British Empire, to do something for evangelizing the nations.—But it does not send Missionaries to our rising and destitute settlements. That is our own work. If it is not done, the sin lies

at our own door. We cannot divide the blame with any one else. The conversion of the world is the common duty of Christendom—and it is wrong for us to think that since the policy—(to use no worse word)—since the policy of Great Britain ever since the 16th century, has been drawing her wealth from the Indies, the piety of Great Britain may justly and largely be called upon, to evangelize at least the millions under her own empire?

We say, then, on this principle of doing our own work, the people of this land ought to mete out their liberality to the Home Mission cause. The cause is our own. The cry of want along the lakes, that sweeps over the prairies, and now echoes from the sides of the Rocky Mountains, and the shores of the Pacific, reaches no ears but ours. Shall we neglect our own work? shall brothers and children ask us to send them the gospel, and ask in vain?

2. There is such a thing as attempting too much at once.—Wisdom will not only look at her work, but at her powers for doing it. A wise farmer will work no more land than he can work well. A wise merchant never extends his business beyond his ability to see to it. A wise mechanic does not undertake a hundred jobs when he knows he can finish but ten. This principle properly comes into action on the matter before us. The liberality of the good may be so extended and diffused, may spread over so wide a space and undertake so much at once, as to diminish its efficacy. By that unwise procedure, attempts, operations, the whole work may be flung into such a condition, as to be utterly unprepared for those exigencies which will arise, and such a condition as to lose much of what has been gained, and thus render benevolence and its labors to some extent in vain. We have had something of this. We had it, when schools among the heathen established at no small expense of labor, money and suffering, were compelled to be disbanded, and the half-taught children were flung back into the arms of a cruel heathenism. It ought not to have been so.—The benevolence of this so favored nation ought to have responded fully to the demands of the occasion. But what we are saying is, that our sentiments of compassion ought not to destroy our prudence. It is better to do less and do it well, than to attempt too much at once, and fail in all of it. And *that spot*, certainly, where our effort should be so concentrated as not to fail through the weakness of too wide diffusion, is to be found in our own country. Let minds accustomed to the carefulness of thinking carry out this idea.

3. The object of all these benevolent enterprises is the same.—We serve Christ. We aim to build up the kingdom of God—to save souls. We have not so much ability in this work as we want. We could print more Bibles, more tracts, educate and send out more ministers of the gospel, if we had more pecuniary means to do it.—(We could not, indeed, bestow Divine grace, but

—blessed be his name,—Jesus Christ bestows it; and after these refreshings of his dews on Zion, young men are found in our churches, too few of whom are brought into this ministry.)—The church could do more to evangelize the world, if she had more means. Where shall she get it?—I know "the silver and the gold are the Lord's;" but he does not bestow them upon idleness nor make his bounty render useless our wisdom. And the additional aid the church needs for her work, in money and men, she must look for, not alone in the additional piety and liberality of her members, but in the help of those whom her piety and prayers shall reclaim. As the gospel extends over new fields, and new churches are raised up, these churches will add their benevolence and their efforts to your own, and thus help on the work of the kingdom of God.

Now, where shall we look for the most and the speediest of this help that we want? Shall we look for it, from the down-trodden hordes of oppressed India converted to God? Shall we expect it from indolent Africa? Will it come from prejudiced China speedily?—or the converted isles of the ocean?—or from classic and christianized Greece? No, no! Best, quickest, most, we may expect it from those very spots in our own country, for whose struggling and infant churches we solicit your benevolence this morning. We point you to the WEST,—the young, vigorous, mighty, but now destitute West. *There* is your aid. Only evangelize her children; and in a little while—before this generation are gone off the stage,—the West shall bring up her rich offerings, and lay them side by side with yours on the altar of God. She will have the means. Look at the opulence already seen in such places as Buffalo and Detroit, and Chicago and Columbus, and Cincinnati, her infant Queen City. Look at her soil. Look at her commerce on the lakes, and pouring along her hundred mighty and majestic rivers. Her sons are no down-trodden victims of oppression. They are no mindless and effeminate hordes of a degenerated and degenerating country. They are born free. Your own blood flows in their veins. Their country has all the elements of wealth and greatness. Struggling now with their difficulties, they will come up a race of active, industrious and vigorous men; and if converted to Christ, they will be the most efficient and most liberal helpers you can look for, in giving the gospel to all the world. They have commenced already to aid you. Two hundred and sixty-four churches in Western New York, once aided in their infancy by the Home Missionary Society, have already given more than seventy two thousand dollars to send missionaries to the more destitute beyond them. They have joined you with both money and men, to send the gospel also to foreign lands. The first church in the city of Utica was a Home Mission church. Its first minister, still alive, was aided by the Hampshire Missionary Society of Massachusetts. Now, that great congregation, in that great and rich and growing city,

pays back such principal and such interest into the treasury of benevolence, as you will look for in vain, from the Missionary churches of Africa or Asia. Just so, of a hundred other churches. We want your benevolence to *make it* just so, till your *evangelized* population has passed the gorges of the Rocky Mountains, and chanted the song of redemption down to the shores of the Pacific. You can make it so if you will. At this very moment, the showers of Divine grace are descending upon your Home Mission churches; and after they have passed the few years of their feebleness and infancy, they will furnish you the most efficient aid you can look for from man. In the WEST lies your best help for converting the world.

4. We have inadvertently encroached upon an idea which we had intended for a fourth and separate consideration. We intended to mention, not only the resources of the West, but the character of the people. But—no matter. Take them together. They are both remarkable. There is no such rich region elsewhere in the whole world, from which you can expect such plentiful and such speedy returns, for what you shall do for it in sending the gospel. There is no such excellence in common character anywhere else, from whose aid and influence and vigor, when touched by the grace of God, you can expect such furtherance for the gospel. *Convert the West, if you would convert the WORLD!*

When you are contemplating this idea, it cannot escape your consideration that there is such a thing as national character; and that your efforts to do good—Christian good in the world—may be vain or effectual, not entirely on account of their own nature, but under the control of other circumstances; especially, the *character* of the men you attempt to christianize. Retrograding people or nations are less hopeful subjects of attempted good, than those in infancy or progress. Scholars and historians will see much force in this idea. In the old age and degeneracy of nations, there is a coming decrepitude of mind, of energy, of genius, of all which constitutes worth and character in nations. *Man* is a different being then. His very blood seems tainted. If mind is not perished, it is devoted to trifling, and not to utility.—If genius lives, it is exercised for little else, than the purposes of luxury and indolence. Rome, Egypt, all Asia are examples. Hopeless, then, almost hopeless is any attempt to help man in his decline; and arrest the downward progress of a nation, which had reached its summit, and commenced the downward and dreadful march of degeneracy! The strife to aid Greece—poetic, classic, beauteous, chivalrous Greece—a strife vain, or almost vain, is an apt and mournful example. There is a stage where *mind* seems to lose its elasticity and independence and genius and decision. Heart has lost its greatness. Themistocles would be ashamed to own as a descendant or a Greek, the low, cunning, time-serving, false-hearted being that now sips the streams of Cephissus. Fabius and Cato, the Gracchi would blush to be named in the same

breath with the modern Italian. *Gone* is the original greatness, the mental dignity of Egypt, Greece, and Rome! Their moral sublimity of character has perished! The Egyptian gazes on the Pyramids without an emotion! The Greek feeds his sheep around the Athenian acropolis, with only the relics of his ancient nation left in his soul,—enough to sigh after the departed glory, but not enough to imitate or emulate the perished greatness which he boasts as having dignified the blood of his ancestors. The cunning and treacherous Italian moves over the tombs of Etruria, and the more modern sepulchers of Senators, Patricians, and Emperors, of poets, orators, and statesmen, without the manliness to attempt to rise to the dignity of the dust he treads on. History lacks example of the resurrection of a nation once gone down to the tomb of its glory. Other races come in upon its soil, perhaps—plant their standards—commence their upward work—catch something of the inspirations of greatness from the grandeur and glory and refinement of the very temples and tombs which they despoil; and rise to a commendable manliness, on the ashes of departed glory. This is common. But the down-hill course of blood is never arrested.—Such is history. Its tale may be sad, but its lesson is deeply instructive.

Now most of the subjects of Foreign Mission effort are just such men. They are *worse* than their ancestors. They are degenerated or degenerating people. They are not on the rise, but on the decline; if indeed they have not become already as debased as sin can make them. At any rate, there is no advancement among them. If they are not sinking, they certainly are not improving. Centuries have rolled over them, and they have continued the same, or gone down deeper into the abysses of ignorance, superstition, and mental littleness and inactivity. They propose to themselves nothing. Every man among them expects to live and die in the same misery and degradation as his fathers have lived and died before him. Hence, not only the improving power of hope is gone, (which always tends to human advancement,) but genius itself is extinguished. It originates nothing. It only copies at best. You may find among them talents, but they are only perverted and misapplied talents. You may find art, cunning, treachery, falsehood; but you look in vain for any thing that tends upwards. What *mind* they have is applied to the worst objects in the worst modes—not merely as beings of conscience, but as beings of intellect and social existence: it is devoted under the narrow influences of an indolent and supreme selfishness! Their *heart* has lost every high and generous feeling. *Conscience* with them, is almost nothing but fear. And thus *all* their character and tendencies and habits are embarked to resist every one of the influences not only of spiritual religion, but of ordinary manliness. We pity them—pray for them—ask you to aid them—*know that the gospel can elevate and save them.* But in more earnest accents we ask you to aid a more promising

race—the vigorous, onward, manly, rushing population of your own growing West. *They* are not the fallen and indolent masses of the old world, now on the down-hill of decline, or already hopeless and unmanned at the bottom. They are not that rudeness which contemns improvement; not the barbarians of the North—Goths or Visigoths come to despoil the refinement of imperial Rome, and trample her glories in the dust. If they *were*, you would have more prospect of good in attempting to Christianize them than in attempting to regenerate the moveless mass of the older nations. But they are the enterprise of New England—the warm blood of affectionate Ireland—the granite character of classic, mindful discriminating Scotland. Such men are good for something. Convert them to Christ and they will be your *best helpers*, and stand with you, shoulder by shoulder, in pushing on the triumphs of the conquering gospel. If, as men, they are better than the effeminacy the debasement, the indolence of the old world, they would also be better as Christians, and strike with a mightier arm when mustered among

"The sacramental host of God's elect."

How much this idea should have influence in *directing* your charities we cannot tell. It certainly should have influence in *eliciting* them. We leave it to your own judgment, as you act on the rule to do that which you think will do most good when God has left you to your own discretion. Your most efficient helpers will be found among such people as you aid this morning. If you need help, if you cannot do all you would for the kingdom of God, *convert the West!* Once evangelized, its character, piety and wealth will double your means of good.

There may be something in this idea not very pleasant. We confess there seems to be. But we are not afraid to preach it, or afraid to have you consider it. We trust it can be weighed candidly and prayerfully. It may seem unpleasant to us to pass by any that are peculiarly degraded and miserable, for a single year, and direct our aims at all on the principle of giving the gospel to men who, when they have got it, will do most to give the gospel to others. But what can we do? We have not the means to do every thing at once. We want aid. Are we not to act somewhat on the principle of taking that course which shall evangelize the world the soonest? and therefore does not pity towards the degraded millions of another hemisphere require of us to lend a strong hand *first* to our own West, that the West may help us to save them?

We know souls may be equally precious. And we would not, if we could help it, overlook, for a single hour, the most degraded mortal to be found among the indolent and vicious and unmanned humanity of the heathen world. We know the Saviour had compassion, and we are to have compassion upon the most worthless. But for doing good to this world of souls, we cannot

but think it a very different thing to convert an independent yeoman on the banks of the Mississippi from what it would be to convert a Hottentot on the sands of Africa, or a half-mindless Hindoo on the banks of the Ganges or the Berhampooter. The one is a different man from the other. Converted, he will be a different Christian. In character and circumstances there is almost a measureless distance between them. *Save* the Hottentot, *save* the Hindoo; but neglect not to call into the army of God the character and the coming means of the West. Give what force to the idea your own judgment assigns to it. We present it, as we do all the other ideas of this sermon, only to invite you to think for yourselves.

But if, in order to convert the West, you *must* do less at the present time for distant people, let not prejudice, or folly or romance, or fanaticism make you hesitate. If in order to evangelize your own growing and mighty West, you *must* needs do it, call back your Missionaries from Asia or Africa. Sooner let the decrepitude and sluggishness of those half-mindless people remain unevangelized, than suffer the giant energies of the race in your own land to remain so. Asia canot help or hurt you. Iowa can —Oregon can: so can Texas, Minesota, New Mexico, and California. The race in these new regions will be giants. Convert them and they will stand in the front rank of your army, to subdue the world to Christ. Leave them without conversion and their unequalled energy and skill, and indomitable fortitude and perseverance, wielded yet by some unholy ambiton or pride or avarice or sensuality, will do more to roll on the car of evil than a thousand-fold as many people *could* do who resemble the dwindled and dwarfish races of India. Those degraded and spell-bound races cannot hurt you. They have not the talents to do it. They lack energy, intellect, genius. They are stereotyped to indolence and effeminacy. Convert them, they will be stereotyped still: they will wear much of the old image as men, if even they have the image of God as Christians. They will be only a kind of half-way Christians; and generation after generation of them will go down to the grave before they will be elevated to the level of your own Anglo-Saxon blood—if, indeed they ever shall reach it. The West is the *most important* region you can find.

5. As you attempt to push the triumphs of the gospel among the heathen, commonly it costs very much of study and time and labor to break down the systems of falsehood. You *must* break down before you can build up. The people are not vacant of religion, and waiting for it. They have one. It is endeared to them, and fastened upon them by a thousand familiar forms and usages, interwoven with all their feelings, and all their government, all their ordinary habits of life, and all their hopes, and extending through the whole frame-work of both society and character. False religions, hallowed by their antiquity—revered as the gift

of departed ancestors—supported by government and custom—falling in with the influence of native and nurtured depravity: these false religions must be *shown* to be false before the Christian Missionary can have access to the heathen mind. Through this thick rubbish he must work his way. It is laborious and difficult work. It costs much time and labor. You cannot *expect* him to accomplish so much, as if half of his life and more than half of his energies had not to be expended in breaking down a system, which blocks up the avenue to the heathen's heart.

There is not a destitute place on the globe where the people are so ripe to receive the gospel and ready to profit by it as in the Home Mission field of our country. It is not a region of idolatry. The people are not prejudiced against Christianity.—They do not regard as an enemy or with suspicion the minister of God you send to them. They hail his approach. They cling to him, ready to share with him the last crust. So much is this the case that a Missionary cannot tear himself from them. And it is very certain, that there is no class of gospel Ministers in the world, who work so hard, and live so poor, and suffer so much, as your Home Missionaries. The people have little to give to support them, but they will not let them go; and those men who love Christ cannot bear to leave his children when they plead with tears—"stay, stay with us, and teach us the way to heaven."

Millions in your own country are at this moment as ready to receive the gospel as the most of the heathen can be brought to be, after years of labor and thousands of expense. The way is ready. There is no heathen system to break down. You are invited to go in and possess the land. However much we may admire that Christian heroism which will be staggered at no difficulties—which will undertake a work for God's love, and the love of souls, the more readily *because* it is arduous, we cannot tell on what principle those who are the *most* ready to receive the gospel and profit by it should be the most *neglected*. Paul did not act on this principle. To the objecting and prejudiced Jews he said, "lo we turn to the Gentiles."

If we neglect for a little while the now open field of our country, obstacles to gospel salvation will be built up there, more dreadful perhaps than the obstacles of heathenism. Papacy, as a religion for men, is a worn out system in Europe. It has little hope of living there much longer, except by the *ungodly device of being linked with national governments*. It will try hard to entrench itself in the West. It is trying. Let it once set up its dominion of blindness and bigotry there, and that field will be open to receive the gospel of truth no longer! The obstacles of Papacy will be as bad as the obstacles of heathenism! Is it right to leave a region so ready for spiritual religion exposed to such a withering curse?

And if we want any proof of the open and ripe condition of our Home Mission field, we may find it in the history of past successes,—a history now filling out, every day, in letters of living light.

In the churches aided by the General Assembly's Board of Missions there were received according to the Reports, on the *profession of their faith*,

In the year ending May,	1837,	1,680	persons.
" "	1838,	1,360	"
" "	1839,	1,400	"
" "	1840,	1,650	"
" "	1841,	1,800	"
" "	1842,	2,000	"
" "	1843,	3,600	"
" "	1844,	2,680	"
" "	1845,	1,282	"
" "	1846,	1,800	"
" "	1847,	1,900	"
" "	1848,	2,000	"
			"
There were received, therefore,		23,152	" in twelve years.

On an average 1,929 every year for *twelve* years.

There were received on the *profession of their faith*, into the churches aided by the American Home Missionary Society,

In the year ending May,	183I,	2,532	persons.
" "	1832,	6,126	"
" "	1833,	4,284	"
" "	1834,	2,736	"
" "	1835,	3,330	"
" "	1836,	3,750	"
" "	1837,	3,752	"
" "	1838,	3,376	"
" "	1839,	2,500	"
" "	1840,	2,840	"
" "	1841,	2,860	"
" "	1842,	3,446	"
" "	1843,	5,853	"
" "	1844,	4,812	"
" "	1845,	2,386	"
" "	1846,	2,272	"
" "	1847,	1,980	"
" "	1848,	2,530	"
There were received, therefore,		61,365	" in eighteen

years. On an average 3,409 persons every year, for *eighteen* years.

We have presented these numbers in order to show you not only the extent but the uniformity of the Divine blessing.

Your own mission field is ripe for the gospel. Your missionaries are not called upon so much to clear away the rubbish, as to build up the temple of God. If it is right for you to work *first*, where you can do most good, you ought to send forth more laborers into this field, already whitened for the harvest of the kingdom:

6. A wise man will look ahead. When we are consulting for

the church we ought to consult for its security and continuance If one place is more safe than another, that fact ought to have some influence upon our counsels. It would be folly to plant churches in a region where there was no probability that they would be secure from violence and destruction, and at the same time neglect regions presenting every prospect for their continuance. We wish to plant churches where they shall last. We cannot well afford to fling away labor and the lives of men.

Now, on this ground let your mind form a comparison betwixt the field abroad and the field at home.

There is scarcely a foreign country wherein your missionaries and your mission churches have any security for being undisturbed. The national government may crush them. Unhappily the governments of this world have had little regard for the church, except when they could wield its influences. They have been very fond indeed, of employing the church as an instrument for furthering their own purposes and policy ever since before the time of Henry the Eighth. Princes have been tenacious of the title ("Fidei Defensor"), "Defender of the Faith," stamped still upon some of their coin, as if they had as much and as unquestionable sovereignty over the church, as they had over the currency. And they have been but too successful in stamping their image upon both. They have wanted both for the same purposes. They have employed them for the same. We can very well endure Cæsar's image and superscription upon the gold and silver, but we prefer not to see it upon the church. While we would render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, we desire the privilege to render unto God the things that are God's. But princes have claimed and still claim to be the "head of the church," in their respective nations. And what they have done, and what security they have left us for the peace and safety of the churches planted in their empires, history tells us but too plainly.

As you aim to comprehend and weigh the force of this idea you will recollect things like the following. You will remember that the Emperor Alexander crushed the Russian Bible Society when it suited his deep and dark policy to do so. He was afraid of the Word of God. You will remember that your first foreign missionaries were forbidden, for a time, to land in India. You will remember that the Nestorian government has recently expelled your missionaries, and killed some of their own people who favored the kind of religion you aimed to plant among their mountains. You will remember the recent butcheries on account of religion which have stained with Christian blood the island of Madagascar. You will remember how centuries of persecution in old Spain, (for example,) extinguished almost the last gleam of Christian light in that beautiful, but misgoverned land. You will remember how the Huguenots of France and the Covenanters of Scotland were hunted by dragoons, and butchered by the thousand, because they would not renounce conscience and the Bible,

and swear allegiance to a corrupt governmental church. Indeed is not the idolatry of a part of India protected at the present moment, according to solemn treaty, by the military power of even Great Britain? The lessons of history are not to be disregarded. And they teach us the watchful jealousy of human governments —how suspiciously they look upon every species of influence over the people which they cannot themselves mould and wield for the accomplishment of their own purposes. Your missionaries and mission operations have not yet, indeed felt much the hindrance of this governmental jealousy; but their security has been owing simply to their weakness. The government has them in its power. It can crush them all in a single month. Let it become necessary for carrying out the policy of the British government that your missions in India should cease, and that government will not be likely to hesitate; it will crush your missions as unscrupulously as it forced opium upon China at the cannon's mouth! Let the time come when your missionaries shall have gathered round them an enlightened and christianized population —a population extending their ideas from truth in religion to truth about the *rights of man*—and then, if your missionaries, or the people they have evangelized, shall dare to breathe any of the sighs of republicanism it will be a signal for their ruin! England will not peaceably suffer the spirit of freedom to wrench the empire of India out of her hands. Let the time come (if it ever can, and who shall say it may not), when it shall be the policy of the British Empire to ally to itself more closely its own favored church (of which its sovereign is the "head,") and to favor the High Church pretensions, which are already become so scornful and arrogant, and then your missionaries will not be suffered to teach unmolested the religion of Christ, *as* men born under the eagle of liberty are accustomed to teach it. We know not what shall come. But we *do* know, in the light of centuries of history that a church leagued with the government becomes a corrupt church; and that human governments, like those of Austria, Italy, Spain, France, have not been accustomed to treat with fair toleration any religion which they could not wield to suit themselves. We do not expect them to do so. We never shall expect it until they shall sever the last link of that unholy chain which binds the state and the church together. The intelligence and piety of Great Britain are now so extensive, and the dissenting interests are so powerful, that there is little to fear perhaps, for the church at home; but these influences give us little security in reference to what the *government* shall do beyond the Cape—or in any place as far off as India. We say this with an eye upon centuries of her history. But if the British empire *is* an honorable exception, it is the only one. Beyond it there is not a place the sun shines upon where you have any security for the churches you plant beyond the boundaries of your own country. Here ONLY is the church safe from the unhallowed touch of the government.

Here ONLY can you have any tolerable security that your work shall last; and that as one generation after another of your converts dies off, they will leave to their posterity the churches and the religion you have given them. Here, in your own land, there is nothing to fear from the government. The government is your own.—You mould it by your own will. You demand of it to mind its own business, and let religion alone. The churches that you plant in your wide field are just as safe as you choose to make them.—There is no probability that political power in this land will ever attempt to interfere with the freedom of religion. It never has done it since we were free. And if it should ever try, it will soon quail before the indignant rebuke of the ballot-box of freemen.

If, then, you would look ahead, and not labor for merely a day—if you would send the gospel and plant churches where their influence and existence have most prospect of security from one generation to another—the ONE SPOT to which you may most hopefully direct your efforts is the country you call your own. Here religion is untrammeled. Here the Bible is free—the church is free—the tongue of the missionary is free. He can talk of the rights of man—if he pleases—while, in the name of his Lord and Master, he calls sinners into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

7. The same amount of expense and labor will bring the gospel into contact with more souls in your own settlements, than in any other destitute region. We are in want of means—of men to convert the world. Economy is certainly no crime, and we have a right to think of it in religion. You can reach the field of Home Missions without crossing the ocean. Your Missionary needs but a little time to get to his work. The people to whom he preaches partially support him. One missionary in service costs you but about a hundred and fifty dollars a year. For that little sum, he preaches the gospel to those who, without your liberality, could not hear it; and reaches more souls with the offers of salvation, than the like expense and time could so well reach, any where else.—When means are limited, and we cannot do every thing at once, we know of no reason why we should not labor most and first, where we may expect most and speediest and best fruits of our labor. We know of no reason why men should refuse a hundred and fifty dollars a year to bring the gospel in contact with a thousand souls in Wisconsin or Iowa; and appropriate six hundred to bring it into similar contact with half that number in Africa or Asia. For neither Asia nor Africa have we done too much; but, for riper fields and readier souls *at home*, we have done too little. If *anywhere* souls *must be* neglected, economy, common sense, duty, tells you *not* to neglect those most easily aided.

Finally, There is a peculiarity in the *field* where your Home Missionaries are laboring, which deserves your deepest reflection.

There, society is rising—character is forming, to give impress, not merely to an equal number, who, in a coming generation, shall rise up on the same field when the present generation is dead, but to give impress, and transmit their religion or their impiety to a vastly greater number. A little done now is worth more than a great deal done a little while hence.

It is a very different thing to pour the gospel and its good influences into a region where society is forming, manners and principles taking their direction, foundations and habits just assuming their shape, and the population vastly increasing; from what it is to do the same thing under entirely opposite circumstances. Among the dense population of India and China, for example; if you convert a hundred souls, their influence is not going to be the same on the coming generation, as the influence of a hundred souls converted in Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minesota, or Oregon. Society *is* formed and habits fixed, and population is dense, in those old countries. A region evangelized there *now*, will only be about the same region evangelized a century hence. It can hold and feed no more; and the present generation will transmit their religion to just about as numerous a generation to come after them. Not so in your infant and growing West. There population increases to outstrip the calculations of the most enthusiastic, and stagger even credulity itself. And it extends, too, onwards into new States and Territories, in a manner that the most profound of your statesmen never anticipated. Twenty-four years since, President Monroe, desirous to have the Indians as separate as could well be from the whites, proposed to colonize those north of the Ohio and east of the Mississippi, in the wilderness region, now called Wisconsin. He deemed that region so remote, that it could not be wanted for the occupation of the white man, for a long time to come. But now that, and another Territory beyond it, Iowa, also, are among the sister states of the Union. Other States will come in. Minesota will soon join the sisterhood. Our territory has recently been vastly increased.

Texas	contains	325,520	square miles;
Oregon	"	341,463	"
New Mexico	"	77,387	"
Upper California	"	448,691	"
These acquisitions, amounting to		1,193,061	"

constitute a territory more than half as large as all that was held by the United States before—a Territory which would make twenty-three States, each as large as the State of New York. Our country has now a Territory of 3,252,574 square miles, nearly equal in extent to the whole of Europe. We have space enough to work in. If *the field is the WORLD*, no small portion of it lies within the scope of our Home Missions. Europe is sending her population here by hundreds of thousands—much faster than we can give them ministers. Our *foreign* work now

[redacted]

The number of souls in your nation will increase beyond all example. The population doubles in about twenty-three years.

That population was in 1851 - - - 20,000,000
If it continues to increase as formerly it will be
in 1851. - - - 32,000,000
in 1881 - - - 51,200,000
in 1911 - - - 81,920,000
At the close of this century it will become - 327,680,000
A hundred years from this time, about - - 655,360,000

—The mind falters. We are not in the habit of thinking of numbers of millions. We cannot tell where the increase will stop. It must stop somewhere—but we see no human reason why it should not go on to the Rocky Mountains, and grow down to the Pacific.

When we are soliciting in behalf of the Six countries of the East desirous to understand our work, we meet the map of nations.—Land after land comes up before us, and the population is now piled on millions. We are astonished at the magnitude of the appeal. We feel called upon, as far as we can, to let our liberality be measured by the numbers that call for it. So we ought to feel. But let us not feel the Eastern argument alone. It EQUALLY comes from the West.—We say equally. We mean so. It may be very pleasant to speak of giving a preached gospel to all the present generation of the world: but it is not very truthful. It will not be. It cannot be. Miracles alone could do it. And as we can only make a beginning now, and expect thereby to benefit the future millions which shall rise, when the present generation is gone; therefore, the *mighty cry of these ocean millions comes as deep and loud and astounding from our own land* as from any other the sun shines on! AS FAST as we can reach them, we have millions at home. Oh, that we had more means, and more grace, and more self-denial to respond to the arithmetic of their plea!

We have done. We leave these arguments to your own mind—to your more mature consideration and your prayers. While the Holy Ghost is descending upon your Zion, and your own

children are converted, remember the children of the wide West, who have no man to preach unto them "Jesus Christ and him crucified." "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?—feed my lambs."

Have we not good reason for maintaining, that there is no other land the sun visits, to which it is so important to give the gospel and its good influences NOW; as it is to give them to the growing and wondrous region, for which you contribute this morning? Millions of the Pagan nations can grow no worse—your own unevangelized millions may. Most solemnly we believe, that the cause of Home Missions is *more neglected*, according to the just principles which should guide us, than any other of the prominent objects which come before us. Aid it, as God has given you ability.

All the interests of our country call on us to aid powerfully the object before us. Our only hope is in the gospel and its influences. The resources of this wonderful land may yet be its curse. Virtue, and freedom, and religion have sometimes been obliged to flee from the riches of the plains and hide themselves in the poverty and munition of rocks. It may be so again; and the very soil we boast, trodden by an ungodly generation, may fall under the vengeful chastisements of an insulted God. It remains to be seen, whether this great nation shall be great in grace or great in wickedness. One or the other it will be. Our condition and resources will have their effect. Our agriculture and commerce, our science and literature, our enterprise, skill, arts, freedom and trade, will yet rear to giant growth the worst passions of our nature; or sanctified by the gospel, help on the kingdom of God. If this shall be an impious land where violence and lawlessness and indolence and dishonesty shall prevail, its blessings will be turned into curses—it will be blasted with the judgments of the Most High God! If the gospel shall triumph, and the Holy Spirit descend upon its borders, no heart can measure the felicity of its coming generations. God will dwell here. And its future millions, as they rise, will transmit their blessings to their posterity and extend to every land the sun shines on, the virtue, the liberty, the intelligence, peace and immortal hope of the kingdom of God.

As you pray, "thy kingdom come,"—as you aim to speed its coming, forget not your own country. Waiting multitudes look eagerly for help. Your Christian bounty may cheer many a sad heart; and many a grateful prayer may be lifted to the Most High to call down blessings on your heads, and the heads of your children after you. God grant that you may yet meet in the high fellowship of heaven, redeemed souls, aided by this morning's bounty, to that blissful and everlasting abode.—Amen.

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SERMON D.

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GOD'S MEANING IN MEN'S SUFFERING.

"It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes."—PSALMS, 119: 71.

THIS is the logic of experience, the reasoning of one that knew, having learned it experimentally. It is a conclusion arrived at, in the mind of the Psalmist, from deep personal acquaintance with the discipline of God's kingdom. It is what a review of his Christian life taught *him*, and it has been verified by every real Christian since: so that it has the force of an old ascertained principle, THAT AFFLICTIONS ARE GOOD FOR THOSE EXERCISED THEREBY.

Our design is, for the purpose of instruction, to develop the proof of this position, and in so doing, to glance at the different modes in which men experience the discipline of affliction, to trace the ways in which it does them good, and to find out some of God's statutes that are thereby learned.

I.—The different forms under which men are called to endure the discipline of affliction. Man is born to trouble. Suffering in some shape, though in widely different degrees, is

sooner or later, the lot of all. Bereavement of friends dear as life; loss of property; loss of health; infirmities and disease of body, with anguish of mind; the woes of the spirit of which the suffering heart alone knows its own bitterness, and the more appreciable maladies of the material frame, as sickness and decay of the active powers; calamities that afflict the inner and the outer man; personal afflictions, and afflictions in the persons of one's friends; disappointments heavy and hard to bear; perplexity and reverses; trials bitter, sharp and long, both from within and without—these are all, at some time or other, the portion of almost every man living, as they have been of all the dead. Few or none can claim exemption from sickness, accident, and distressing change. Many there be that think they can say with the weeping prophet, *I am the man that hath seen affliction:* but where is there one that has lived out the joyous period of youth, and has had any experience of the realities of life, who can honestly say, I have never known grief or trouble; I am ignorant of what it is to be afflicted? Of all men, without exception, it is true, there is a wave of sorrow now breaking over their heads, or there is one on its way coming. It were neither possible nor of any profit to enumerate particularly all the ways in which God sees it good for men to be afflicted, one in this way, another in that: *Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living.*

II.—We pass then to consider how and why, in accordance with the experience of David, it is good to be afflicted; or, in other words, to trace some of the ways in which it does men good to be afflicted. *It is good for me that I have been afflicted.* This is not the voice of nature, but the voice of grace. Nature says, it is good to be in prosperity; it is good to have the smiles of fortune; it is good to have silver and gold increase; it is good to possess houses and lands; it is good to be successful in business, and to live at ease; it is good to be surrounded by and happy in one's friends; it is good to have health and animal spirits, and the free use of one's mind and limbs; it is good to have ambition gratified; to have life flow smoothly, and to have all one's desires fulfilled. This is the voice of nature as to what is good. But in view of grace, it is good to be afflicted. It is good for a man to be laid low; good to be disappointed and crossed; good to be bereaved and distressed; good to be balked in business; good to have riches take to themselves wings and fly away; good to have self thwarted, and comforts diminished, and pride laid low; good to have the spirits droop, and health decay; good to feel the hard pressure of disease and pain; good to have one's earthly prospects clouded, and to be shut up, hampered, and perplexed; to be destitute, afflicted,

tormented; good to have the world look dark, and life cheerless, and the grave to be desired; good to have the things of time stripped of their delusion and glare, and made to seem empty and unsatisfying as indeed they are; good for a man to have his idols removed, and earthly props taken from under him, hopes blown away, plans broken up, resources cut off, the tide of prosperity turned back, the sun withdrawn, all God's waves and billows going over him, and the soul compelled to turn from creatures to God, and to cry mightily to him for strength and salvation.

In the view of Infinite Wisdom and the rectified wisdom of man, all this is good, *because* its effects is so; because in reality adversity is better for the soul than prosperity; because humiliation and sorrow are in very truth more favorable to man's highest interests and well-being, both for this life and that which is to come, than a continual flow of success and self-gratification. Lord Bacon was right in saying, "Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament; adversity is the blessing of the New, which carrieth the greater benediction and the clearer revelation of God's favor. Yet even in the Old Testament, if you listen to David's harp, you shall hear as many hearse-like airs as carols; and the pencil of the Holy Ghost hath labored more in describing the afflictions of Job than the felicities of Solomon."

For more reasons than Lord Bacon could give, adversity is better for the soul than prosperity, for it is the effect of long continued success to harden the heart, to keep the soul pleased with this life, away from Christ, and unready for eternity. It tends to make a man contented with his portion here, wedded to this world, and thoughtless about a better. *In prosperity I said I shall never be moved.* But the tendency of afflictions is to soften the heart, to disgust one with the unsatisfying vanities of time, to put in attractive contrast the wealth and importance of eternity, to wean from this world, and make one prepare for the world to come.

Even a true Christian, in prosperity, when everything goes well with him; when property and honors are increasing; when friends smile and are dear to him; when health is vigorous, spirits buoyant, and prospects bright, is then in great danger of forgetting God, of losing his spirituality, of becoming worldly, and proud, and self-indulgent, and getting to live too much for himself, too little for his Saviour and the salvation of his fellow-men; and he does not ordinarily enjoy then the spirit of prayer, and he is far from being at such a time the happiest man. But now let his prosperity have a check; let a cherished partner, or child, or dear friend, be taken from him, or something that he feels, that cuts him to the quiek; let him be arrested by sickness; let him be bitterly crossed and disappointed, and his way hedged up—now, if really a Christian, he

turns to God, he flies to him in prayer, he humbles himself before his Heavenly Father; the world again loses its hold upon him, and sinks into its comparative insignificance; eternity is realized as at hand; the worth of the soul is apprehended, and the value of salvation by Christ; the glory of the Saviour, and the conversion of souls to him, are felt to be the great things to live for; spiritual life that had run so low is again enkindled, and the man so afflicted again becomes happy in serving God, submitting to his will, and growing in grace.

Cecil's remarks in conversation to this effect, as reported by his friend, are very true and striking. The foolish creature man, he says, gets bewitched sometimes by the enchantments and sorceries of life. "He begins to lose the lively sense of that something which is superior to the glories of the world. His groveling soul begins to say, is not this fine? Is not that charming? Is not that noble house worth a wish? Is not this equipage worth a sigh? He must go to the word of God to know what a thing is worth. He must be taught there to call things by their proper names. If he have lost this habit, when his heart puts those questions, he will be likely to answer them like a fool; as I have done a thousand times. He will forget that God puts his children into possession of these things as mere stewards; and that the possession of them increases his responsibility. He will sit down and plan and scheme to obtain possession of things which he forgets are to be burned up and destroyed. But God dashes the fond scheme into pieces. He disappoints the project, and with the chastisement he sends instruction; for he knows that the silly creature, if left to himself, would begin, like the spider whose web has been swept away, to spin again." This now is God's way; how different from Satan's, who would always give us just the thing our heart is set upon, who always sides and leagues in with our own evil inclinations. He would work in with our ambition. He would pamper our lusts and pride. But God has better things in store for those whom he means to sanctify as his children, which they must therefore be brought earnestly to desire and seek after; and this will often be only through the wreck and sacrifice of all the heart holds most dear.

> The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
> Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown.

Fallen and depraved as men are, naturally averse from God and good, this must be so. It is affliction of some kind that first leads the most of men in adult life to think upon their ways, to turn their feet unto God's testimonies, and to seek durable riches and righteousness in heaven. And it is *rare* for a grown-up person to give the heart to God, in the midst of worldly ease and prosperity, before the experience of painful

trial within or without. And it is still rarer, perhaps, that Christians in this life arrive at eminent holiness, and the state of uniform high enjoyment of religion, uninterrupted union with God and conformity to his will, without passing through great afflictions. It is by this discipline only that they *can* be emptied of self, and the world and their idols. What prosperity could never do for us, or allow to be done, adversity slowly though surely brings about: we kiss the rod that smites, and learn what that scripture meaneth, "Blessed is the man whom thou chasteneth, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law. Behold, I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." Then how do we joyfully acknowledge, our trials being sanctified by grace, and turned into triumphs—"I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hath afflicted me. It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes. Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I have kept thy law."

It is true, affliction is a harsh instructor, and its lessons hard, like those of a severe schoolmaster; yet we learn thereby most needful lessons.

> The heart that God breaks with affliction's stroke,
> Oft, like the flower when stricken by the storm,
> Rises from earth, more steadfastly to turn
> Itself to heaven, whither as a guide,
> Kindly though stern, Affliction still is leading,
> Even to the home of endless joy and peace.
> There on the borders of that better land
> Shall Pain's sharp ministry for ever cease.
> Then shall we bless thee, safely landed there,
> And know above how good thy teachings were;
> Then feel thy keenest strokes to us in love were given,
> That hearts most crushed on earth shall most rejoice in heaven.

Thus we think it is made plain how "happy is the man whom God correcteth, for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten." "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might *learn thy statutes.*"

III.—We are then ready for our third inquiry, or a particular consideration of the statutes of God that are learned by affliction. "That I might learn thy statutes."

1. One of the statutes plainly taught by affliction is, that God uses trials as a medicine to correct the distempers and cure the spiritual maladies of his children. Very many forms of the great moral disease of sin there are to be treated, often malignant, chronic, and deadly. Sometimes there are dreadful ulcers and plagues of the moral being so deep that they can only be eradicated by the knife and caustic of a Divine surgery; and these God has to use with us, although, of course, while really corrective and friendly, they cannot but give pain, the

much talked of discovery of painless surgery, not yet having been introduced into the kingdom of grace.

It is the nature of almost all medicines and operations that are really effective, to be distasteful and repulsive in taking them; and they excite and produce an impression upon the system just in proportion to their own strength and the violence of the disease to be subdued. A slight affection or derangement of the health is alleviated and removed by a gentle medicine; but a very strong disease, such as sin often is, can be overcome only by the most powerful remedies. Now, in order to cure the distempers and correct the had humors and vicious habits of his children, God will use such remedies in the form of trials, painful though they be in the immediate application. Hence a good man in affliction may be regarded as a patient under treatment for a cure by the best physicians; and we can but congratulate him, though the operation may be severe. That is best for a man which keeps his soul near to God, and teaches him the need of watchfulness, and the importance of keeping his armor on, and his shield up, and his sword drawn.

It is founded upon universal experience that the Christian flourishes most and grows the strongest in trials and storms. Hence, undoubtedly, the saying, in substance, of Baxter, that although ordinarily God would have vicissitudes of summer and winter, day and night, in order that the *church may grow extensively in the summer of prosperity, and intensively and rootedly in the winter of adversity;* yet, usually, the night of the church is longer than its day, and day itself has its storms and tempests. Who of us has ever talked with any tried, ripe Christian upon his special afflictions, without finding him to prize most highly of all the lessons he had learned and the benefits which had resulted. to him from his severest trials? This there are many who will say even when immediately under the operation of the medicine of affliction: and if sanctifying grace and the teaching of the Spirit be offered, we shall hear from all when the trial is over, that they would not have lost one pain or sorrow.

But our danger under affliction lies in having the pain without the profit; in going through our trials and afflictions as a sort of allotted calamity common to all, instead of submissively regarding them as a medicinal process, appointed by Infinite Wisdom and Love for a definite purpose, to cure particular sins. We do not sufficiently watch the symptoms, either of our disease or our remedy. We do not, as we ought, deliver up ourselves to, and fall heartily in with the design of, our great Physician; and, therefore, as in the case of a man who takes a medicine by force, and without faith or goodwill, we lose much of its benefit. The remedy does not accomplish its design until it destroys in us the deep and entwining root of selfishness, and substitutes the graces of the Spirit, and that

especially of pure love to God and disinterested kindness to men.

Those graces will only thrive in the soul, when there has been much plowing and harrowing, and weeding out the roots of bitterness, which are the natural productions of the perverse soil of our hearts. The plow, the harrow, and the hoe of affliction, are instruments we by no means naturally love, for they bring out to our sight many an ugly reptile of pride and self-will that lay beneath the surface quite undiscovered before. But discover them we must before we can be thoroughly cured, and this is one of the statutes God means we should learn under this wise though trying discipline.

2. Another of the Divine statutes learned in affliction is, that it is God's will and way to make his children perfect through suffering. Even the Great Captain of our salvation was sealed with the sacred seal of suffering. In the language of the quaint old hymn, so full of genuine religious experience:

"The heirs of salvation,
I know by his word,
Through much tribulation
Must follow their Lord."

"You have entered the ship with Christ," said Luther to his friend, John of Hesse: "You have entered the ship with Christ; what do you look for? Fine weather? Rather expect winds, tempests and waves to cover the ship till she begin to sink. This is the baptism with which you must first be baptized; and then the calm will follow upon your awakening Christ. and imploring his help; for sometimes he will appear to sleep for a season." There is great truth here, which is borne out by the experience of almost all eminent Christians, but especially of that truly devout and holy woman, Madame Guyon, who by suffering, especially, was sanctified, and who says of herself: "Sorrows have come in upon me like a flood. I have been obliged to say with the Psalmist: 'All thy waves and thy billows have gone over me;' and with Jeremiah: 'Thou hast caused the arrows of thy quiver to enter into my veins.' But the love of God rendered my sorrows sweet. His invisible hand has supported me. Happy are they who are sharers with Christ in suffering."

"That we should bear the cross is thy command,
Die to the world, and live to self no more;
Suffer, unmoved beneath the rudest hand;
When shipwreck'd, pleased as when upon the shore.
My soul! rest happy in thy low estate,
Nor hope nor wish to be esteemed or great:
To take the impression of a Will Divine,
Be that thy glory, and those riches thine."

That is a striking passage of Jeremiah, true alas of very many now: I spake unto thee in thy prosperity, and thou saidst I will not hear. How often is it so, a man's ear obstinate or quite deaf to expostulations, and to the voice of God himself in his Word, and the heart obdurate, till the deaf ear is pierced by the loud voice of Providence, and the hard heart made tender by severe affliction! Prosperity long continued is apt to make such a lethargy steal over the soul that the still voice of God in calm weather and the cool of the day will not awaken a man; but He must thunder and lighten about his ears in afflictions, before the man will even notice that God is speaking to him. While all things go on smoothly with a man in his sins, the threatenings of God's Word beat upon him with no more force than stubble or snow against a stone wall. He stands unshaken and unconcerned, presuming that the course of his affairs will go on always as evenly as now, that to-morrow will be as to-day, and much more abundant; until the big hail-storm of sorrow actually falls upon his own head, and he is startled by some dire calamity.

Now the wisdom of God is seen in the choice of his rods, in the divers ways whereby he corrects and makes his children perfect through suffering; for it is far from being one and the same form of trouble that will work upon and purge every sin, and he accordingly disciplines and punishes men, so to speak, in kind. If one's besetting sin be avarice, or a too great fondness for acquisition and the creation of wealth, he tells our riches to take wings and fly away: and our ships are sunk, our houses and stores and factories burned; our fields are flooded, our farms swept away, our crops rotted in the ground or blasted in the ear, or mildewed before they are harvested; our speculations turn out poorly; our stocks depreciate; our banks of deposit become bankrupt: and all this in a natural way, and by natural means, without God's at all suspending or working contrary to second causes. Or if our sin be any sensual indulgence, or too great fondness for creature comforts and pleasures, then God often makes that indulgence like the manna of the greedy Israelites, to breed its own worm, and the quails so fondly lusted after to come out at the nostrils, the stomach to loathe even its natural food, and the appetite and ability of digestion both to fail. Or if the sin that is ensnaring our affections and keeping us at a distance from God be any creature-idolatry, as a wife or child, then God, as we are strikingly taught in Parnell's Hermit:

> "Then God to save the father takes the son,
> The poor fond father humbled in the dust,
> Now owns in tears his punishment is just."

Providences like these are what bring us to our senses, and

serve as a check-rein on us when we are running wild. These are the *brakes*, which God himself, like a prudent *brakeman*, wisely lets down upon us when our speed is getting dangerous, and we are liable to run off the track. These, in other words, are God's ways of repression when we are getting too much momentum, and hurrying on too fast in a career of self-pleasing, of business, of ambition, worldliness, or dissipation in any way. *Lo all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, to bring back his soul from the pit.*

When trials thus carry us back to God, and purge the heart and life from sin, leaving both more pure, heavenly and humble than they found them; or when better, still, a long-continued and most harrassing trial leads a Christian to do what it is said the pearl oyster does, i.e., secrete from irself a precious substance to cover over the irritating grain of sand or sharp bit of metal that has got within its shell, thus turning it into a gem, how blessed the effect, and who would not be almost willing to bear the trial for the sake of the resulting pearl.

It is a remark of John Foster, that a salutary impression made on the soul by some affliction of the body is a good greatly more than compensating the evil. In the last great account, no doubt, a vast number of happy spirits will have to ascribe that happiness to the evils inflicted on their bodies as the immediate instrumental cause. Surely then those are health-producing, though distressing sicknesses, curative though powerful purges, kindly though stunning blows of affliction, that through sanctification of the spirit are followed by such a result to the soul made perfect through suffering; and whether it be for a day, or a week, or a month, or a year, or a series of years, that we are arrested and laid aside, each sickness and every other painful trial should be viewed as special messengers to us from the great Disposer of all events, giving the opportunity, and loudly calling on us to improve them for our own good and God's glory.

And this leads me to remark by way of practical improvement to this subject, that christians now under the rod ought to be thankful for this proof of their Father's dealing and love. "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all (sons) are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons. Therefore despise not thou the chastenings of the Almighty, neither faint when thou art rebuked of him. For He maketh sore and bindeth up; he woundeth, and his hands make whole. He shall deliver thee in six troubles, yea in seven there shall no evil touch thee."

These scriptures have a definite and clear reasoning as to the cause and intent of afflictions to the righteous; the cause: God's love to them; the intent: the increase of their love to

him. My brethren count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this that the trying of your faith worketh patience. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love him. "When he is tried" —the trial of faith it is that is precious; to trust God in the thick midnight of trial under providences which every moment gather blackness, that is precious; it is of great intrinsic value in God's sight, for it honor's him, and there is a peculiar blessing pronounced upon *not* seeing and yet believing, which they who do thus believe, and who when tried thankfully embrace afflictions, and strive to get the good of them, shall assuredly know. What thou seest not now thou shalt see hereafter.

> "God nothing does, nor suffers to be done,
> But what thou wouldst thyself could thou but see
> Through all the events of things as well as He."

It is not a moderate faith that will keep us believing while not seeing; nor is it a superficial rooting and grounding that will keep us steady when the storms of adversity arise. But our roots must strike deep, and *know the place of stones* and be wound around the pillars of the promises, if we would be preserved from shaking under the inevitable vicissitudes and trials of life.

I have observed at sea, and it is often noticed by mariners, that in the beginning of bad weather, before the storm was fairly set in and fixed in its course, the needle in the compass-box was considerably affected, and there was unusual oscillation probably through the changing or disturbance of the atmosphere's electric forces. But after the gale was fairly formed or at its height, the needle became true to its polarity. In like manner is it with a mind under trial that has been once thoroughly magnetized by the grace of God, so as to have the law of Divine polarity impressed upon it making it to turn always to that pole-star of Bethlehem, the great magnet of the regenerated soul. Though ordinarily true to his pole, yet in sudden emergencies, on the first storm-burst of trial, it is seldom or never that the Christian can at once repress the flutter, and agitation of nature, control or understand its deviations, collect his energies, and repose calmly on God. It is seldom that faith, taken by surprise, does at once steady the soul, and lift a man clear above hostile infirmities and fears. Although it be true that when once magnetized by the love of God, the soul does always point upward by strong attraction, as the compass-needle to the north, yet, like that same needle, suddenly acted upon by a disturbing force, you must give it time to recover its balance; and, its oscillations done, to fasten upon the central point of rest.

We have known God's dear children sometimes, when calamities came suddenly in prospect, when huge billows seemed ready to go over them, and a black cloud of sorrows was about to burst upon their heads, at first trembling and anxious, swinging a little with trepidation to this side and that of the central point of rest. But as the trial became more distinctly defined, the cloud's lightning began to flash, and its big drops to fall, the palpitating heart would be still, the vibrations of the will would cease, faith gather strength, and the eye of the soul be upturned and fastened on a faithful God, and its hand grasp firmly the promises, which neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, or any other creature can ever loosen.

Brethren, is it in those promises that we are strongly rooted, so as to fear no evil? Is our anchor firm in the Word of God? Is it cast within the veil? And do we find our ship ride easy with it in the gale? The engrossing earnestness with which the captain of a ship (which the good providence of God once placed me in) studied his chart, and watched the soundings, while it was so foggy we could hardly see a ship's length ahead, in order to make his way safely to port over a dangerous shoal, and at the close of a long voyage, taught me a lesson I have never forgotten of the way in which we should all study, and watch the answers of God's word and prayer, as we prosecute the voyage of life, having to sail by a thousand sunken rocks and shoals and perilous quicksands, before we can make the port of peace.

He would himself carefully put the tallow or soap into the hollow end of the lead, then heave it himself or hold the line, and carefully ascertain when it reached the bottom. Then he would scrutinize it closely when hauled up, to learn what report it brought from the bottom, whether it were sand, or gravel, or mud, or ooze adhering to the end, or whether it were dented as if it had fallen on rocks. Then he would sit down to his chart with compass, and slide and slate, to compare what he had found by the soundings with what was told on the paper, and fix, if possible, upon his position on the great shoal, and shape his course accordingly through the fog-damp darkness for the next hour. Then he would lie down on the transom in his great watch-coat to catch a half-hour's sleep, with the chart unrolled before him on the cabin table, and a signal lantern swinging over it.

Now with the same carefulness should we ponder the word of God, that we may be shaping our course aright over the tempestuous sea of life, where, even as to the mariner,

> **Dangers of every shape and name**
> **Attend the followers of the Lamb.**

It is seldom in our voyage along these coasts of time that we are not in peril from some out-jutting reef, or shoal, or sunken rock, or moving quicksand; to avoid which we must heave the lead, and watch our soundings, and study well our chart, and keep a good look-out. Then, if only vigilant and faithful with what thankfulness and grace in our hearts shall we be singing the rest of our way through time—

> A thousand death's I daily 'scape,
> I pass by many a pit:
> I sail by many dreadful rocks,
> Where others have been split.

And when the perils of probation are all over, and we are safe home at last in heaven, how will the numberless vicissitudes and trials of the voyage be as a dream when one awaketh! Safely moored there in the port of peace, and finding the end not only answer but far exceed our expectations, how will the trials endured and the hazards seen in time enhance the glory of eternity; and with what fervent gratitude shall we praise God for them all!

We remark, finally, that those who are not exercised with afflictions, unless they are manifestly growing in grace, have just ground for fear; fear lest continued prosperity harden their hearts, and beget the spirit of pride and self-indulgence and worldliness, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, that it become unfruitful; and fear lest it be an evidence of no peculiar fatherly love to them on the part of God. They are far from being the happiest and safest men who prosper in the world, who increase in riches, whose eyes stand out with fatness, who have more than heart could wish; who are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men; who heap up silver, and gold, and merchandize, who multiply houses, and lands, and honors.

On slippery rocks I see them stand; and in view of true wisdom their envied estate, with all its affluence, and ease, and luxury, but forgetfulness of God, is not worth a desire in comparison with that man's whom God chooseth in the furnace of affliction, and lays his rod upon him as a dear son whom He means to ripen for glory. Ah, what a *meaning* is that!

For which now of these two, the afflicted man and the prospered man will be best off in the end? What effect is affliction working upon the afflicted man? What effect is prosperity working upon the prospered man? If affliction in the one case is softening the heart, leading to reflection and prayer, weaning one from the world, loosening your hold on the earth, making you long for heaven, and inducing the temper of heaven now in your heart, a holy hatred of what is contrary to it, and the love of what enthrones heaven in the soul, then are

you, the afflicted man, the happy man; for you will be so in the end, and your affliction is the necessary instrument to that blessed end, being the discipline employed by God to make you holy.

And if, on the other hand, prosperity is hardening the heart, as it generally does (for the contrary is the exception), if it is making one worldly, and selfish, and self-confident, and forgetful of God; if it is making one more earnest for acquisitions in property than for acquisitions in holiness, more eager to be rich than to be good, more bent upon accumulating than upon distributing for God and religion, then are you, the prospered man, the unhappy man, for you will be so in the end.

It is far from being always what makes us best off now that is really best for us, but what will make us best off for the future; what is best for our characters; what is best to cure us of our besetting sins; what is best for our religious prosperity; what will most conduce to our growth in grace; what will be most likely to kill the seeds of sin in us, and keep down the weeds of worldliness, vanity, self-love, and pride; what will tend to make us considerate and kind, duly regardful of others, and mainly anxious for the glory of God; what will be best for me as an immortal being, on trial for eternity, having a soul to be saved or lost; under instant obligation to work out my own salvation with fear and trembling, and to do all that is possible to save others; what, in fine, will make me the best man, and the best Christian, the most conscientious, benevolent, and careful in my intercourse with other men, the most upright, sincere, and dutiful toward God.

Ah, constituted as we are, it is far from being continued prosperity that is most likely to do this; the being blown upon long or always in life by favorable gales, and wafted along on a prosperous tide of success. But rather is it the blasts of adversity, the rough winds of affliction and distress, that drive us for shelter to the Lord Jesus Christ. Who in this view will not choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season! They are but for a season, and that season at best oh how short! While, many are the afflictions of the righteous, but (what a world of meaning follows!) but the Lord delivereth out of them all. Precious deliverance! worth all the previous delivery over unto pain.

In God's good time may there come such a deliverance to all the sons and daughters of affliction that now hear me. Let none of us faint in the day of adversity and prove that our strength is small; but may the consolations of God be large with our souls, and alike under blessing and trial, in joy and sorrow, may we hold fast our integrity, and steadfastly trust and serve our God and Saviour to the end. And may trials be so sanctified to us all, and the meaning of God therein be de-

veloped, that the conclusive logic of our experience shall be that of David: "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes. Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now have I kept thy law."

To that Great Being who doeth all things well, who dispenses all life's allotments in perfect rectitude and love, to God only wise be all honor and glory, both now and for ever. Amen.

SERMON DI.

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THE DUTY AND BENEFIT OF PASTORAL VISITATION.

"For they watch for souls as they who must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief."—HEB., 13: 17.

THIS Scripture refers to the care which a pious minister feels for the salvation of souls. It exhibits the complete idea of a faithful pastor. The love of Christ constraining him, empowered by his authority, and set over a people "by the laying on of the hands," his office and business are to save, if possible, those committed to his charge. He watches them with intense solicitude. His eyes ever upon them, and every opportunity is improved to do them good. He preaches—preaches much—preaches well, plainly and earnestly; not so much in the wisdom of words, but in the "demonstration of the Spirit;" then watches to see the blessing, and hastens to secure every impression, "if by any means he may save some." At the close of every day, he renders his account to his Master; with joy, if successful; with grief, if he have labored in vain. This must necessarily refer to the present discharge of his office; for it is not possible for any perversion of the people to prevent a faithful minister's giving up his final account with joy. Nor can any groans be mingled with those triumphant songs, which God will put into the mouths of his people. But their Master will remember what they suffered by their people's means; and the account may sit heavy on them, when the sorrows of their faithful pastors are over: "*Watch for souls;*" this is the main idea of the passage. Chrysostom says, he never read these words without trembling, though he often preached several times a day. "Brethren," says Baxter, "if saving souls

be your end, you will certainly intend it out of the pulpit as well as in it."

The text suggests a very serious question, touching the labors of pastors. Do they exercise as much thought and zeal in visiting and conversing with their people, as they do in the preparation for the pulpit? *Do pastors visit as much and as well as they can and ought?"*

It is proposed in this discourse to urge the duty of pastoral visitation, and consider some of the causes which endanger the faithful performance of it.

I.—Pastoral visitation is a duty of the ministerial office.

1. The idea is involved in the office itself.

The elemetary idea of a pastor is that of acquaintance; familiar, mutual, intimate acquaintance; extending to all the flock; to their names, families, dispositions, characters and circumstances. As his office is to "*watch for souls*," the pastor must be familiar with the spiritual condition of his people. This clearly, cannot be without personal acquaintance with them individually; and a competent knowledge of their wants and experiences can be gained in no other way than by personal visits.

This acquaintance is indispensable to a faithful and suitable preparation for the pulpit. A pastor must distinguish natural character. To deal wisely, the temperaments of different individuals must be understood. Some minds require very different treatment from others. What would be proper for one might be positively injurious to another. One needs strong meat, another milk, and would be destroyed by that which nourishes and perfects the other. Ignorant of individul character and feeling, and modes of thought, no man can "so divide the word of truth as to give to each a portion in due season;" and he who does not cannot be said, if judged by the Gospel standard, to preach well. He may have a strong bow, and a quiver filled with well-fledged arrows, but he will be perpetually drawing at a venture. His sermons may entertain, but they will not profit.

2. The duty of pastoral visitation is argued from apostolic and primitive example. We find this duty inculcated in the first instructions given to the Christian church. In his solemn charge to the Ephesian elders, Paul says: "Take heed to all the flock." To take heed to all must imply a care of every individual: and to take heed to every one implies a knowledge of every one. We find, also, among the first ministrations of the apostles was that of breaking bread "from house to house." In addition to their preaching publicly in the Temple every day, they ceased not "to teach and preach from house to house."

Paul, about to take his final leave of the Ephesian church,

sums up his labors with them thus: "Serving God in all humility of mind, and with many tears and temptations which befel me, by the lying in wait of the Jews; and how I kept nothing back that was profitable unto you, and have showed you, and have taught you publicly, *and from house to house.*" This is sufficient to show what was apostolic usage.

There are many passages taken from the ancient councils, from which it appears that a personal care of all the members of the churches were enjoined upon the elders after the days of the apostles. One from Ignatius will be conclusive. He says, "Let assemblies be often gathered; *seek after* (or inquire of) *all by name*; despise not servent-men, nor maids."

3. Visiting from house to house has always been regarded as a duty of the gospel ministry. In modern times, no less than in ancient, this duty is insisted upon in ordination vows. Who ever heard a charge to a pastor, which did not in the most solemn manner enjoin a faithful attention to this? The duty is a matter of positive contract, and the flock universally expect it; and they have a right to expect it. It is their right in a pastor, that he shall take heed to them in their families. They feel the painful sensation of a wrong, a violation of a solemn compact, if deprived of these shepherd visits.

4. The duty of pastoral visitation is inferred from its usefulness. It is a well established fact, that the most successful pastors are those who are much and systematically among their people, watching for souls. History is ample in proof touching this point. There have always been some pastors whose labors have been greatly blessed. Revivals after revivals have marked the history of their ministry. Conversions were frequent, and their churches lived. But how did these pastors labor? It will be found that they not only preached *much* and *well*, but they *watched the effects* of their sermons, and followed them up by *immediate personal* interviews. This fact, it is believed, accounts for their signal usefulness.

Even in times of revival, this personal labor is found to be indispensable to succes. The "inquiry meeting" is as essential as the preaching. Impressions made from the pulpit, even when the special presence of the Spirit is enjoyed, need to be followed up by personal conversation and instruction to secure conversion, and if in such circumstances there be extreme danger that impressions be lost, if not followed by immediate conversation and prayer, how much more probable in the absence of revival. Paul, doubtless, felt this necessity, when, in addition to his preaching, he went from house to house. And so did Baxter, Rowland, Hill, Wesley, Whitefield, Nettleton and Payson. Indeed there can be but little doubt, that in the majority of cases, the final work of conversion has been secured by personal conversation and prayer. With this will accord the experience of every pastor who has ever been instrumental in *bringing sinners* to Christ.

The usefulness of this watching for souls is not confined to the people. The pastor himself is benefitted. He here finds out what suffering humanity is. Till he knows this he is not half fitted for the ministry. There is no substitute for this part of his education and discipline, not even prayer itself. Nothing can be more useful to him, personally, than to visit the dwellings of the poor, the sick, the aged, and the afflicted, as a messenger of consolation and instruction as well of relief. Accustomed himself to the comforts of life, and it may be its luxuries, every thing there is a lesson. He sees what poverty is in its evils and trials: the scanty room, scanty food, scanty fuel and clothing, appeal to his observation and sensibilities. He sees Christ in his poor, and in every thing hears him speak, and feels it all in his heart. He sees humanity in *life* instead of the ideal, as viewed in his study. Instead of the neatness and order of his chamber, he finds himself perhaps in the midst of confusion and noise. Instead of this well-stored library he finds nothing but the old family Bible, with here and there some remnants of books. In such scenes, a kind and faithful pastor can scarcely fail to learn what he cannot learn in his study or even in his closet—how religion sustains the soul of the humble poor; how to those who trust him, Christ is better than riches. He here takes lessons from no ideal life. In these close, crowded rooms, amidst disorder and want, he sees poverty, old age, sickness and toil, borne without complaint, nay with sweet resignation and cheerfulness. He may know a language which to them is unintelligible; yet he finds that they too have a language and an experience to which he is no less a stranger. "And he may think too," says Dr. Arnold, "and if he does, he may ever bless the hour that took him there, that in fifty years or less, his studies and all concerned with them will have perished for ever, whilst their language and their feelings, only perfected in the putting off their mortal bodies, will be those of all-wise spirits in the presence of God and of Christ."

Your pastor is in the habit of visiting often an aged man, who has been confined to his room for several years, with a very distressing sickness. I never leave his room as I go in. On his table is always to be seen the "old Bible," and some of Doddridge's or Baxter's works—these make up the whole of his library. I always find the leaves of the Bible turned down to some passages which he has selected to read to me. He often reads some of the most familiar passages with such an accent and tone as to make them appear new, possessing a meaning which I had never apprehended before. I retire to my study with new themes and thoughrs for sermons, such as the suffering, the tempted and the desponding need. I learn in that room of affiiction what cannot be found in the best furnished library. Let no pastor, for the sake of the good of his

own soul, be a stranger to his people, especially to the poor, the sick, the aged and the afflicted. By no study can he make amends for this neglect.

II.—In regard to pastoral visitation, I proceed to mention some of the things which endanger the faithful performance of this duty.

1. The demands of the times upon the pulpit. Ministers are not free from the weakness of human nature which determines the mind to extremes. There is danger, it is thought, of an extreme devotion to the study preparations for the pulpit. There is a strong tendency to this thing. It grows out of the imperative demands which are now made upon the pulpit. These demands increase continually, and we are glad to have it so. It indicates religious and social improvement, progress, and right feeling in reference to the duty and functions of the Christian ministry. And the pulpit must meet the demands; it must lead the public mind, and mould the age, and make the Gospel mighty to regenerate and elevate the world. But if, on the contrary, in the "human and intellectual," the pulpit makes no advance, it will fall behind, and lose its forming and controlling power over the great mind and heart of humanity; for it cannot, if it would, hold back the age. If the pulpit attempts to keep the mode of thought and expression confined to the model of the past, it will find little sympathy with, and lose its hold upon the people.

To keep up with the advancement of the age, we need not change our doctrines. These are as old as eternity, and will ever be, as they ever have been, the rudimental truths of Christianity. These we need not change, *we cannot*, and preserve the system; but we do need, that these doctrines of old should be brought out, as fresh waters from a living fountain.

The different ages of the church have all received the same truths, but they were not taught in the same manner, nor even through the same media; now, in the symbols of prophecy and Judean worship—then in the "lucid narrative and inspired epistle." The teachers of the "half-hundred generations" who followed, have unfolded the same doctrines in the manner which served their day. And in obedience to the same law of change, the times in which we live demand a conformity to *its* peculiar mode of thought and expression. The same "old doctrines" must now be presented in a manner which is adapted to "the active mind of the most actively-thinking age that ever lived."

The demands on the pulpit are rightfully and powerfully pressed. They are imperative, and cannot be set aside. We have created this demand by a higher and more general education of the people. We have not only the moderately, but the well-educated to be instructed—the "masters of logic and

science," the disciplined, the judges of good composition, correct reasoning and proper delivery. We have the inquisitive, the prejudiced, the skeptical, and the avowed atheist. These are to be addressed, interested, and convinced. They are all to be met on their own grounds, and met manfully. But this can be done by those only who are themselves "masters of logic and science." "And although on the whole, it were better that sermons be suited to the wants of the commonly educated, yet these, occasionally at least, should be made to feel the sublimity of truths which demand the homage of the greatest intellects, and bring low the stoutest hearts."

Let us not be understood as expressing any regrets that much is said and done to elevate the standard of qualification for the pulpit. My object is to call attention to the danger that pastors, in attempting to answer these demands, will devote themselves, too exclusively to study. True, they must study much and thoroughly. A minister, in these times, must needs be a scholar and a student, in order to be influential and successful in the ministry. As there can be no substitute for pastoral visitation, so there can be none for intellectual discipline and scholarship. He must toil early and late, patiently and prayerfully, in his study; but, then again, no amount of study can make up for the neglect of visitation. If he watch for souls in the study, he must also out of it, or many a good impression will be lost, and many a convinced soul left to perish. If the age demand more thought in the pulpit, it also calls for more vigilance *out* of it. If the people demand a higher order of talent *at* the altar, so do they need more watching away from it. If the education of the popular mind be more finished, so are the influences which drown men's souls in perdition.

2. In addition to the demands on the pulpit for higher mental qualifications, the pastor is subjected to a powerful temptation, which grows out of the influence of study upon his habits and feelings. For the more a man studies the more he feels the need of it. Study also induces and strengthens the love and the habit of study. This tendency is natural, and often very strong. The studious pastor must needs watch against it, or he will soon find himself exclusively devoted to his *pulpit* preparations, to the neglect of the out-door work of a pastor. It requires no little self-denial to break away from the quiet study, and go forth into the field of active service. But it will be found that he who yields to the love of study, at the expense of other pastoral duties, though his sermons be better prepared, they will not, as a general fact, be as useful or as satisfactory. His flock will feel a consciousness of neglect, if deprived of the shepherd's visits.

3. The increasing facilities for intellectual study and improvement offer a strong temptation to neglect pastoral visitation. Books and periodicals of value and interest are multi-

plying immensely; and if the student indulge his natural feeling and taste, but little time will be left to watch for souls. Besides, it is a matter of no little self-denial to lay aside a favorite author, to engage in pastoral visits from house to house. "A minister of a literary taste is in danger of becoming an idolator of books." Dr. Porter, in his Letters on Revivals, instances a case of this kind. "He was so fond of reading, especially works of genius and popular literature, that the spirituality of his heart was gradually impaired: he laid down his favorite author with reluctance, to attend a prayer meeting; went to fulfil an engagement with little pastoral feeling; and returning to his study, became absorbed in his intellectual pursuits instead of his appropriate work, as one appointed to 'watch for souls.' Rare instances of conversion, but no revivals occurred under his ministry."

4. The inadequate support of the ministry is a hindrance to pastoral visitation. This stinted policy very seriously interferes with the labors of a pastor. There must be system in labor, in order to accomplish much. If a studious pastor get time to visit, he must have something like a system of study. But the poor cannot control their time. Necessity cannot be put off. The minister can no more resist its demands than can the day-laborer. He studies when he *can*, for study he must at some rate, if he would sustain his influence; the visiting is done if it can be, but to any purpose, it is nearly impossible.

5. Another hindering cause is the vast amount of extra labor which is thrown upon the ministry of this day. There are burdens laid upon the ministry of this age, of which former times knew nothing. Were ministers so disposed, they cannot perform that amount of pastoral labor which is desirable. Benevolent and reformatory objects are multiplying greatly. Their claims are pressing and imperative. They all look to the clergy for support, and this is right. The responsibility of their existence and support rests mainly on them. Conventions and anniversaries call for their attendance and aid. Every good enterprise levies heavy taxes upon the time and mental capital of the ministry; and it is well that they are able and willing to meet the demand. But these contributions draw largely from their great and special work for watching souls.

6. A low state of religious feeling endangers the faithful discharge of this duty. This, though one of the most urgent reasons for this kind of labor, is one of the most powerful influences which operate to prevent it. It is hard and self-denying, to make pastoral visits, where there is no religious interest to invite them and render the duty agreeable. "Like priest, like people," is an old proverb, and generally a true one; and the converse of the saying may be just as truthful, Like people, like priest. Does not the pastor feel the influence upon his heart of a cold and worldly people? Is it easy to keep the glow of devotion upon his altar, when all around him is frozen? Must he not inhale the air in which he lives? He may go among his flock from the warm communings of his study, but if he find no sympathy, no warm and responsive hearts among them, will not his ardor cool? Will he love to break away from the genial temperature of his study, and go forth to be chilled in the damp cold atmosphere without? In such circumstances, how is human nature likely to act? The pastor finds but little to encourage him to such toil, and less to compensate him for the loss of time, which he could spend so much to his pleasure and profit in his study. This may not be right, but it is the logic of human nature.

This hindering cause may not be in the people alone. No pastor will watch for souls, who does not possess, in some good measure, the spirit of Christ. Doubtless one of the principal reasons why there is so little truly pastoral labor is, that there is so little real love for perishing souls. Brethren, if the salvation of souls be our end, "we shall certainly intend it *out* of the pulpit as well as *in* it." Do our pastors really "watch for souls as those who must give account?"

I conclude by saying: The power of the pulpit for good is fully conceded: the faithful preaching of the cross is God's own chosen means of saving the world; and ministers in these times cannot study too hard or too much, and they must seek an increasingly high standard of qualification as public teachers of the Word. But while this is obviously true, it is none the less true that pastoral labor is indispensable to the highest efficiency and usefulness of the pulpit. No matter what strength of intellect, or brilliancy of genius, or power of eloquence, may be exhibited in the preacher, if he is wanting as a pastor in sympathy, or watchfulness, or tender care and solicitude for his flock, his ministry will not be eminently successful in winning souls to Christ. The sowing of the seed is far from being the whole of the labor of the spiritual husbandman; the ground must first be broken up and prepared; and there must be constant watching with great anxiety and much prayer for the springing up of the seed and its growth to maturity. The work of *preaching*, though first in importance and never to be neglected or poorly performed, is but half the work of the Christian ministry. This may be done, and done well, and yet but meager results follow. The *pastor* may be useful and his visits blessed to the salvation of the soul, when the preacher has failed to awaken, and his best sermons been as water poured forth. May God endow his ministers with wisdom and power as preachers of the everlasting gospel, and impart to them all the grace and virtues needful to a faithful discharge of all their pastoral duties, that they may "watch for souls as they who must give account."

FEELING IN RELIGION.

BY THE EDITOR.

The religion of Jesus Christ is more than a doctrinal belief—more than an intellectual exercise: to be a Christian is to be any thing but a stoic. It has to do primarily and continually with the moral feelings, the sensibilities and affections of our nature. It appeals as really and as earnestly to all that *feels* as to all that *thinks* in man. Depravity is a terrible state as well as a doctrinal error—an alienation of the affections and passions from their true and proper object, as well as the perversion and blight of the mental faculties; and a religion that would recover man from his apostacy must, while it enlightens and corrects his understanding, lay a Divine hand upon his heart, as the seat of emotion, and invoke its sensibilities, and through it electrify and quicken the soul, and pour into it the tide of life everlasting.

We have no sympathy with those who make religion *all* feeling and no doctrine—a passion only or natural excitement, instead of an inward and all-pervading life. Still we hold that religion demands and justifies, and is adapted to produce feeling the most intense and profound that ever glowed in the heart of man, or seraph, or found expression in language or life. No man, we think, can know what religion is as a Divine Doctrine and Life in the soul, and not be moved to the very depths of his intellectual and moral being.

Men feel enough on every subject but that of religion. In the pursuit of wealth, fame, power and pleasure—any of the objects of earthly desire and

love, their whole being is alive; their passions blaze; earnestness looks out in every feature; decision, intense interest, all-absorbing devotion, mark all their conduct. They feel intensely; they show it in their manner and life: and who calls them mad? The world justifies their intensest feeling, in the pursuit and enjoyment of its transient good. Must a man show feeling on every subject, save religion? Has the world such power to fascinate, electrify, energize its votaries in every line of thought, pursuit and experience; and yet religion, with its infinite range of incomparable objects and worlds of truth and fact, must awaken or elicit no emotion?

Religion is pre-eminently adapted to produce feeling. As a *Doctrine*, it stands out before the mind as a grand, living, sublime embodiment of Jehovah, in the perfections of his being, and the enactments of His law, and the wonders of His grace. It heralds the awful realities of the future; it is the voice of immortality speaking to all the hopes and aspirations of the immortal within. It fastens on the soul the idea of an all-perfect and everywhere present God; it reveals the stupendous fact of man's apostacy and the method of his salvation: in the distance, looming up with fearful distinctness, we get a sight of a world on fire, the judgment seat of Jesus Christ, the resurrection scene, the final gathering and separation, the glory of the blessed and the doom eternal of the damned. As a matter of Doctrine, religion is the most important, desirable, soul-moving thing in the universe.

How is it possible for a man to *avoid* feeling, who receives the doctrines of religion? In the language of Foster, "There they stand before me not in a deceptive vision, but in an absolute reality, the most important things that can be in the view of any being on this globe, or that has left it: the Redeemer of man, salvation, perdition, death, judgment, eternity! They stand confronting me, that there may be in me something corresponding to them. It is in the presence of God that I thus stand with these most awful objects before me; it is by his light that I see them; it is his authority in its utmost fullness, that insists on their demand of a corresponding state of mind; it is his voice that pronounces me lost, if that answerable state be not here. And yet, is it the fact, that I am indifferent still? Here is the soul that can acknowledge all this, and still not tremble, nor care, nor pray, nor strive! can be at liberty for any pursuit, or gayety, or amusement. One could almost imagine that realizing such a state of things in a man's own soul might produce an amazement enough to suspend for a while even the sense of personal interest; that a man migh be absorbed awhile before he came again to the consciousness of being himself the subject; as we should look at some strange and dreadful phenomenon in the natural world. In truth there is no phenomenon in the world so portentous."

Religion is a Life as well as a Doctrine; and that life is from God himself. To experience religion, therefore, is to experience a thorough renovation of nature, radical change of character and living; to put off a sinful and corrupt nature, and put on a holy one; to forsake all the old paths of thought, and habit, and experience, and go in a new and opposite direction. And this change is produced by the mighty workings of the Word and Spirit of God; no other agency is adequate to produce it. Now is it reasonable to suppose that a man can undergo so great a moral change, be shaken by the powers of the world to come, and wrought upon by the Divine Spirit; experience in his soul conviction and penitence for sin, the hopes and joys and fears of religion, and show no feeling?

Religion has also a grand *Historic* interest. The Incarnation, with its marvelous attending circumstances: the history of the Old Testament church, and the conflicts and triumphs of the New: the stirring examples of patriarchs and prophets, apostles and martyrs; the brightening page of prophecy, and the illustrating and corresponding wonders of Providence, a hastening death, a decaying world, and probation just ready to issue in glory or misery eternal; surely here is enough that is interesting and moving, to awaken our drowsy powers and thrill the soul with emotion. Religion is, indeed, no

trifle. God has not made the mighty heart of man to be sluggish or cold on the infinite and sublime matter of religion. Religion as a doctrine, a life, an historic embodiment of truth, piety and worth, may well make us feel as nothing else can.

PENALTY AS A MOTIVE IN PREACHING

The case before us (the preaching of Jonah) legitimately assigns a high importance to penalty as a motive in preaching. There is, however, a great deal said against it at the present time; strong efforts are made to raise prejudice against it. It is sometimes called preaching terror. It is said by many, "we do not hold to this frightening people into religion." And how was it with Jonah? So far as it appears he preached nothing but terror—utter and speedy ruin, with no indicated way of escape; and the effect was universal and simultaneous, a humbled and reformed nation. It was a true message, written in their very hearts, that they were guilty, and that a fearful retribution was before them; hence the effect these words had upon them.

Punishment, as the desert of sin, and its sure award, is to be preached because it is true—it is in the Bible. If it be not here, if God's statute-book holds not forth penalty, the positive infliction of punishment upon the evil-doer, then no statute-book has it; nor can any reach or combination of language get out the idea, that a wicked man shall be punished for his wickedness. But the question comes round, why preach it? Because God reveals it, and commands the utterance. "Preach the preaching I bid thee." Why preach it? Because men are made with fears, and the doctrine in question starts those fears, and stirs up their souls to think about an escape from the impending ruin. There is a part of man's nature, which nothing else will reach; here, of course, a work, nothing else will do, Let the preacher throw away this consideration, this stern feature of truth, this crowning sanction of Heaven, or decline to use it, and his authority, his power, his hold upon ungodly men goes with it. Preachers do tell us, as matter of experience, that this is the doctrine, this terrible aspect of truth is the one, which awakens the sinner, whenever he is awakened; he begins to consider by beginning to be afraid. It, certainly, cannot be expedient to drop this disturbing element, and hush every whisper of a reckoning to come, as a threatened doom. Then, there is nothing left but promise, and the cry of peace; peace to the wicked—every road ends in heaven—all kinds of conduct alike crowned with glory and blessedness. Will this do? In a world like this, of high-handed wrong, peopled everywhere with the daring and the vile, and where the tendency of all hearts is to evil, is there a sober man who believes it will do, to blot out penalty and cover up the pit? Then you may do what you please, commit any crime in the long and gory catalogue; only keep clear of human justice, there is no other fear; and, if perchance, you are too hard-pushed by the human avenger, and are likely to suffer, you can take the friendly steel and open the vital passage, and your imprisoned soul shall go clear, and go up where the Being who rules over all awaits it, and who will open Heaven to your blood-stained spirit, and kindly say, "thou persecuted one, come in hither, I will protect you, for I am the friend of liars, and murderers, and all such." Is God such a being? Is such a message true? Will it do good? Will it restrain men? Will it humble them and make them feel that sinning is bad business, and that sin is an abominable thing, and bring them to repentance, and reform them, and make them holy? There is no need of any words on this point. There

is power in fear, in the fear of hell: and ministers must be allowed to preach the doctrine of hell, or all their preaching will be vain and nugatory. Let it be done in the just proportion; above all, let it be with the right spirit, a tender spirit. The denouncing prophet ought to be a weeping prophet; his warnings and uttered woes accompanied with his tears; then will there be a melting and subduing efficacy.

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And here we strike upon one of the great difficulties of preaching on these old foundations. It lies in the fact, that preaching has been so long, and frequent, and faithful. Jonah's was a new message; uttered in unaccustomed ears; at the first sound of it those ears were eager and erect, and those limbs shook with the fear of the coming woe. It was so well adapted, and all so fresh, that the people were arrested and most deeply affected. But, now, truth, which came down divinely arrayed, has grown threadbare from age and use, is cast out and goes begging. The people have had so much of it that they do not care much about it; they have come to hold it very cheap. They have heard it till hearing is mere habit, or decency, or ceremony. It has been heard, till it has lost much of its power to interest and amuse the mind. That oft-used phrase—gospel-hardened, is, perhaps, rhetorically barbarous, but it is terribly significant—gospel hardened!---hardened by such an instrument, by such a manifestation, a revelation of God's love, solicitude for the soul, His invitations and earnest wooings to win it, His melting influence upon it, how could these harden but by perversion and resistance? The guilt of such a course, who can tell? And the condemnation, who can describe or indicate its severity and weight?----*Dr. Shepard in Biblical Repository.*

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SERMON DII.

BY REV. D. B. COE,

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THE MEMORY OF THE LOST.

Son, remember."—LUKE, 16 : 25.

MANY who fully believe the doctrine of future retributions, appear to lose sight of the *continuity* of our existence. They look upon death as a sort of chemistry which destroys our personal identity, and transforms us into beings essentially different from what we are in the present life, Thus the intimate connection between probation and retribution is practically dissolved. The doctrine of future rewards and punishments loses its power, unless we keep in mind that we are to carry into the eternal world the same souls, with all their faculties, which we possess here. This truth is taught with terrible distinctness and power, in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. These two individuals are followed—the one from his poverty and sufferings to his rest in Abraham's bosom ; the other from his lordly palace and sumptuous fare to his place of torment. The latter, though occupied with his present agonies, still remembers the past, summoning before him the scenes of his earthly career, and Abraham says to him " Son, remember that thou, in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things, but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented "

We have here presented for our consideration the *office of memory in the retributions of the future world.* Let us inquire

I. Whether there is satisfactory evidence that the memory of earthly scenes will be retained in eternity. The text, it may be acknowledged, is a parable, and does not neces-

sarily refer to a specific case. But though our Saviour might not have had reference to a particular individual, yet the facts themselves must be real, otherwise the parable teaches a falsehood. To represent a lost soul as recurring to the events of its earthly existence, when lost souls have no such power, would be a flagrant misrepresentation, such as we cannot charge upon our Saviour. We grant that this is not a historical narrative of a *particular individual* who remembered, but an imaginary case, to illustrate the general truth, that the soul in a future world does remember.

Indeed, this is implied in the very nature of retribution. The soul is to be punished for the deeds done in the body; and unless it remember those deeds, how can it know for what it is punished? How can conscience, whose stings constitute an important element in this punishment, inflict remorse for sins which are not remembered? How can God be vindicated for the infliction of the curse of his law? How can every mouth be stopped, and the whole world become guilty before God, as the result of unremembered transgressions? The nature of retribution, and the end of God's government in it, require that the soul should remember.

Moreover, the *philosophy of the mind* itself teaches the same thing. There is no proof that any part of the mind's knowledge is ever lost. We forget, that is, ideas pass from our thoughts, and are lost for the time, but reflection, and association, and various other causes, can bring back these lost possessions, and make present to our thoughts the events of years gone by. Go to the place of your birth, and look at the objects that were familiar to you in early days, and the scenes and events of childhood, which have been gone from you for years, will come thronging up from the storehouse of memory, and you will almost think yourself a child again. The past is not forever gone, and at the appropriate signal it can all be summoned before us.

And is there any evidence that death will break this chain of memory? The ancients were accustomed to write upon parchments; and when they had no further use for what was written, it was erased, and the same surface was covered again. Such a parchment was called a *palimpsest*. A modern process has been discovered, by which the first impressions on the palimpsest may be rendered visible, and thus records that were lost for ages have been found. The human mind is a "palimpsest," On its tablets many successive impressions have been written. The early ones have been erased and forgotten, and others imprinted in their place; but the spiritual chemistry of the future world will bring to light those hidden characters, and the long lost records of our past lives will be recovered and *remembered*.

Many facts, however, might be adduced, bearing upon this position. We know, that in some cases, as the clay taber-

nacle tumbles down, the *memory* seems to be quickened with a new life. Persons on the very brink of the grave have been known to relate, with wonderful minuteness, circumstances which occurred many years before, and had been long forgotten. Sometimes they have even used a *language* which they had learned in childhood, but in which they had not been able to converse in years. A Lutheran clergyman in Philadelphia asserts, that he has often heard aged Germans, on their death-beds, pray in the German language, which they had not spoken for sixty years. It is also related by persons rescued from drowning, after consciousness had ceased, that during the few moments of their consciousness while in the water, their whole lives seemed to rush in a torrent of recollection through their minds. These, and many other facts of a similar character, show that the powers of mind do not partake of the body's decay, and they distinctly foreshadow its increased activity in its disembodied state. And what is there in death, either to impair the powers of the mind or break the chain of its exercises? Why should the soul be more affected in its qualities by the dissolution of the whole body, than by the ambutation of a limb? It escapes from its prison, and changes its residence, but does not lose its identity, nor surrender its powers. It will anticipate the future; it will be conscious of the present; *it will remember the past.*

II. Not only will the memory exist in the future world, but it will probably possess far greater activity and energy than in the present life, and thus be enabled to recall the past with a distinctness and vividness which are now wholly unknown.

I admit that we are now going beyond the domain of certain knowledge, but we may make inferences with considerable certainty, from facts which are well known. It is rational to suppose that the mind will acquire new activity, by its emancipation from the body; that when it throws off this mortal coil, it will start up into a new and more vigorous life; and why should not memory receive a new impulse as well as the other powers? That our *knowing* faculty will be vastly increased, is expressly asserted in the Word of God. Why not, then, the *remembering* faculty, which is so intimately associated with it?

But there will be circumstances connected with the lost which must greatly facilitate the remembering of earthly scenes. There will be nothing to divert the mind from the view and study of the gloomy past. The lost soul will be excluded from all society except the society of those as solitary and wretched as itself, and shut up to its own melancholy reflections. The saved, we have reason to believe, will be actually engaged in ministries of good, and in this will consist no small part of their happiness. But the lost

will have nothing to do but to "remember." They are spoken of in the Scriptures as shut up in prison, as bound in chains. They will be constrained to reflect—they will find no other employment. There will be nothing to turn off the mind from its dismal work of remembering. There will be no bargains to be made—no schemes of ambition to be formed—no schemes of gaiety and mirth to drown his thoughts and keep them from straying back over the past. There will be nothing to do but to remember, and the memory will act with terrible energy and effect.

You know what reflection does for a guilty soul even in this world. Peter was very comfortable for a while, after denying his Master, but "*when he thought thereon* he wept." Judas, as soon as he came to *reflect*, saw, as he had not seen it before, the enormity of his sin in betraying his Master, and in bitter anguish of soul cast down the price of the Saviour's blood, and rushed out and hanged himself. Herod was so troubled by the remembrance that he had murdered John the Baptist, that he could not think Christ was any one else than his murdered victim raised from the grave. This, said he, is John the Baptist: he is risen from the dead. How often have criminals shown no uneasiness in consequence of their crimes, till they come to reflect in the solitude of a dungeon. Then they *remembered*, and every thought of the past rolled, as in billows of fire, through their souls. Why is it, that solitary confinement, without labor, is regarded as the severest form of imprisonment? It is because the lonely victim can find nothing to do but to remember. And this incessant remembering has often proved more than the mind could bear, and reason has been driven from her throne. Philanthropists have protesed against the cruelty of thus compelling the criminal continually to remember.

In the old State-prison in Connecticut, this form of punishment was employed as the extreme of severity. There was an apartment of the prison called the "sounding-room," which was round—a cavity dug from the solid rock. In this spherical cell the refractory convict was chained to the floor, and left to his solitary reflections. This treatment was always successful. The stoutest heart could not endure it long. "Give me something to do," he would say, "or at least something to look at; or if that cannot be, give me a cell that is not round—one that has some inequality, or corner, or crevice—*something* on which I can fix my aching eye—something to occupy my aching thought." Yet this was but a few days, and much of this time was spent in sleep. And if memory can do such a work for a guilty soul, during a few short hours of reflection in an *earthly* prison, oh! what an array of bitter, appalling thoughts will it summon before the soul during its endless reflections in the prison of despair!

There will be time enough there to spend an *age* upon each particular act of life. There will be no variety, no objects of curiosity or interest to divert the mind. There will be no respite, no sleep, no rest,—nothing but *incessant, intense, remembering.*

But, it may be urged, the condition of the lost soul is not represented as a *solitary* one. Will not the society which the sinner will meet in the eternal abode shield him, in some measure, from the power of the remembered past? No! On the other hand, it will constantly remind him, with new distinctness, of the scenes of his probation. He will meet in the world of torment those whom he knew on earth, and whom he encouraged and helped on in the road to death.

When the exile, who has been driven into banishment for crimes committed in his native land, meets an old accomplice in crime whose ruin he has himself assisted to procure, how vividly does the meeting call to mind the scenes of their guilty career, mantling the cheek with a deeper hue of shame, and piercing the soul with sharper stings of remorse! Will it be otherwise, when the exile from God and Heaven encounters the companions of his godless days—perhaps the victims of his own sinful conduct or example? Must not the meeting awaken a thousand bitter memories of this wasted probation, and open new vials of woe upon the conscience-stricken soul? All the associations of the world of the lost will be the agents which conscience shall employ to carry the mind back to earth, and to echo the terrible words of Abraham to the rich man—*remember! remember!*

The agency of the Devil, by whom they were deceived and allured to ruin, will greatly quicken the memory of the lost, and supply abundant materials to exercise it. Now he would have men forget their sins; wipe out the faintest remembrance of them, lest they should be so distressed by them as to cry to God for mercy and for deliverence from them. But in the world to come we know not that he could do this if he would, and evidently he would not do it if he could. For he is supremely malignat, and is bent on making his victims as utterly miserable as he can. When once he has made sure of them beyond the possibility of escape, he will throw off the mask of innocence and kindness which he now wears, and make it his chief delight to torment them. To this dreadful end will he apply all the art and power of his infernal agency. He will see that they escape no bitter reflection or organizing thought; no ingredient in their cup of woe will be wanting; and he will constrain them to drink that cup to its lowest dregs. With bitter taunts for their folly, and fiendish delight in their woes, he will point them to the wasted and perverted past—a Saviour refused—a probation lost—a heaven despised—repeating, though with a far different motive, the words of Abraham to the rich man, *remember! remember!*

The process of *judgment*, moreover, will greatly quicken memory and furnish the mind with exhaustless topics of reflection. "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." By some means, we know not what, we shall be enabled to recall all the scenes and acts and even the thoughts of our whole lives; and the terrible array will be as distinct before our eyes as the sun in heaven. And as God himself summons them before us, as they are the basis of judgment, and the grounds of the final sentence, and as conscience will stand ready to burn them into the soul unless they are washed out by Jesus' blood, they will remain for ever in distinct remembrance. But it is proper to inquire,

III. *What subjects will probably be most prominent in the reflections of the lost soul.*

"Remember," said Abraham to the rich man, "that thou in thy lifetime *receivedst thy good things.*" Here, then, is one thing which the lost will certainly remember. They will remember the gifts of Providence, for which they requited their Maker with ingratitude and rebellion.

My hearer, God has opened his hand, and strewed your path in life with blessings. The wholesome atmosphere that heaves your breast, the healthful pulsations of your heart, the supply of your unnumbered daily wants, the shield that protects your slumbers at midnight, the friends that share with you the trials and joys of life, the innumerable blessings with which your life is filled, are the free bounty of your forgotten Father in heaven; they are so many cords thrown around your soul to draw you to himself: and if you break away from them all and press on in impenitence down to death and to hell, you will remember these ten thousand kindnesses of the Lord. The remembrance of the amazing ingratitude of your conduct in resisting all these mercies, and hardening your neck in rebellion against the generous Giver, will follow you to eternity, and harrow up your feelings to their intensest pitch. You will remember distinctly each of the countless blessings with which God crowned your lives, and gladdened your hearts in this world of grace, but which were forgotten in unthankfulness. You will remember how He fed, and clothed, and protected you, though you were so unthankful and disobedient; how He held back the bolt of his anger from your head, and permitted you to prosper while you were "despising the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." All this, and the ingratitude it involves, and which you would give worlds to forget, you will be compelled to remember, and remember for ever.

2. Again, you will doubtless remember the *spiritual privileges* which you failed to improve. Whatever may be your

present estimate of these privileges, you will fully appreciate them when they are for ever gone. If you shall live and die as you are, impenitent, you will begin to consider then what you have lost. You will recount the days now passing over you, bright with the promises of mercy. A Saviour "wounded for your transgressions, bruised for your iniquities," will stand before you, and you will remember how you pierced him by your sins. You will remember all the means of grace which you resisted—the gracious Spirit who strove with you till you grieved him finally away—the ministry of the word, proclaiming the offers of life in your ear, which earnest entreaties to repent you disregarded. These Sabbaths will return to you—not as available realities to be again enjoyed—but the ghosts of their murdered hours will throng up the avenues of memory to lay their accusations at your feet. You will remember this house of prayer, where you so often turned your back upon your Maker, and the memorials of your Saviour's love. You will remember this blessed Bible, given to make men wise unto salvation, the dust of whose unopened lids will testify against you. You will remember its holy truths, once your rule of action and your guide, but now the matter of your accusation and the sentence of eternal condemnation. You will remember how those influences followed you up, step after step, from Sabbath to Sabbath, year after year—from the earliest dawn of reason to the close of life—and how you steadily, perseveringly, and stubbornly resisted them all—fighting your way through a thick array of warnings, entreaties, prayers, tears, nay, through the blood of atonement, and the strivings of the Spirit, down to eternal death.

3. There is another class of means by which God is striving to win sinners to his service and love; I mean his *Paternal chastisements*. Many are subdued and saved by the hand of affliction upon whom all other means have been tried in vain.

My hearers! why is it that God has so often stepped between you and the object of your earthly desire? Why has He so often disappointed your plans, and blasted your hopes, and stripped you of worldly good? Why has He constrained you so often to see and to feel the utter emptiness and vanity of all things earthly, and to sigh in your soul over the blight and misery of this sinful state of being? It is that he might withdraw your affections from earth and centre them on heaven—reclaim you from the ways of sin, and establish you in obedience. This is the design and the natural tendency of all God's chastisements; and this would be their invariable effect, through the blessing of his grace, if they were not resisted and perverted. You may not see this now: sin may shut this truth out of sight; but the day will come when the darkness will vanish, and you will re-

member all the scenes of your earthly suffering and disappointment with a perfect recollection. Memory, from the remotest future, will wander back to this probationary world, and recount not only every mercy of God, but every dealing of his paternal faithfulness with his wayward child, and your insensibility and incorrigibleness under the discipline

Call up to-day some of the reminiscences of the past. Let recollection bring back the time when, arrested by the hand of God, you found yourself prostrate and helpless on a bed of sicknesss. Then an opening grave, a proffered heaven, a threatened hell, a despised yet infinately-needed Saviour, seized upon your thoughts and constrained reflection and prayer, and you resolved, under the pressure of these then felt truths, to devote your remaining days to the service of God, should He in mercy spare and raise you up. But you forgot it all, your sickness and your vows, as soon as you recovered ; but those broken vows, made to God in that solemn hour, though hidden, are not effaced from the tablets of your soul. Like characters written with invisible ink, and which are brought out by exposure to heat, so will they be revealed by the fires of the final day ; and they will be remembered while eternity endures.

Think again. God has taken from you cherished friends, from whose dying lips, from whose opening graves, you have heard the warning, "Prepare to meet thy God!" For a time the impression of that solemn death-scene lingered in your mind and restrained your conduct, but at length you effaced it all, and now think, perhaps, that the unpleasant reflections which it once suggested, will never more revisit your heart. But be not deceived. That scene, with its attendant circumstances, is engraved on your spiritual being in characters of immortality ; and memory will one day revive it, and confront you with the unwelcome record ; and no hand will ever be able to efface it—no voice command it away. Transfixed in mute astonishment and despair, the soul will look upon, and read and ponder the pages of a past and almost forgotten experience, as memory reproduces them, one after another, and holds them up before the mind.

Sinners will remember in eternity *the evil influence* which they exerted while on earth, and all the fatal consequences of it. The wretched man alluded to in the text, when he found there was no relief to be had for himself, entreated that his "five brethren," whom he had left behind, might be warned, lest they also should come to the same place of torment. Was this request the dictate of benevolence towards his brethren?" Not at all ; there is no benevolence in hell. There can be no natural affection. Every being is perfectly selfish and perfectly hateful. There is no pity felt there for sinners on earth ; no desires cherished in the bosom of the lost for their salvation and happiness. The devil

would make every creature as wicked and as miserable as himself; and this doubtless is the spirit of that entire world of total and unrestrained depravity. But there is *remorse* in hell, and this will account for this seemingly strange request. This despairing and tormented man remembered the influence he had exerted over those five brethren; his conscience already accused him in their name. He dreaded the thought of being confronted with them face to face in that world of torment. He knew well that their presence would torture him eternally with the reflection that he had been an accomplice in their guilt and ruin, perhaps their corrupter and destroyer; and, if possible, he would escape this additional pang; he could not endure their bitter reproaches. And no doubt the remembrance of the ruin which they have brought upon others, causes the keenest and most excruciating pang felt in the world of torment. Few go there alone. Few can look around them there and not see some doomed spirit reproaching them with its ruin.

My unconverted hearer, have not some of your companions gone before you into eternity, and gone unprepared? They, doubtless, remember their ungodly example in this life, and their evil influence over you, and, if they could, would prevent your following them to their dismal abode. Perhaps they are even now begging that some messenger may be sent to warn you of your approaching doom, and to entreat you not to come to that place of torment. But soon, if you repent not, you will be with them, and like them; and, like the rich man, you will remember what you have done for the ruin of others; that you lent your example and influence to the enemy of your souls.

Are you a parent? God has committed to your care the souls of those whom you love as your own life, and bidden you to train them to virtue, to piety, and heaven. But by your example, the most powerful of all influences upon their minds, you are training them up for sin, and impenitence, and perdition. And if they shall follow you in your footsteps down to death, as they are likely to do, you will remember your agency in their ruin. You will remember, that, had you taught them, and lived before them, as you ought, they might have been with you, adoring spirits before the throne, instead of hopeless outcasts and exiles. Oh! what a fact for a parent to remember through eternity. What remorse and anguish will it forever awaken!

But you sustain other relations in which you are exerting the same kind of influence over other minds. This influence, unseen, it may be, now, will be revealed in the light of eternity, and as its fruit, many of those whom you loved in life may be sharers of your eternal prison. A husband or wife, a brother or sister, a friend or associate, may there reproach you as the instrument of their eternal undoing, pointing you

to the very temptation by which you ensnared them, to the laugh or sneer by which you banished their serious thoughts, and led them to grieve the Spirit of God, to the whole life of sin and impenitence which you lived before them. Ah! you will remember it all; and bitter indeed will be the reflection —bitter enough, with no other agents of misery, to overwhelm the soul with remorse and anguish. What, then, with all its other bitter ingredients, must be the sinner's cup of final woe!

But we will pursue these thoughts no farther. I have endeavored, in what I have said, not to rely upon conjecture, but to keep within the range of Scripture teaching, and legitimate inference from it. These views, we know, are not pleasing and grateful to unrenewed hearts, but if they are in accordance with the *facts* of the case, they are of immense importance, and every unconverted soul should strive to realize *now*, what, unless he speedily repent, he must realize when it is too late to find relief.

Imagine, then, the change *already past*, which may pass upon you at any hour;—imagine yourself engaged in the reflections I have been describing. The affairs of earth are all over, and you are reviewing them from your abode in eternity. A voice from the bright world above, which you can see, but cannot enter, says to you, "Son remember," and all the scenes of probation start up before you, as witnesses to the justice of your doom, and in the words of inspiration, thou mourn at last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed, and say, "How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof!" There is the golden opportunities I wasted, and the countless gifts of my Father's goodness which I abused. There is the long, dark, terrible catalogue of my sins, which must witness against me forever. There is the heaven I might have gained. There is the glorious Saviour, in whose presence I might have spent my eternity. There is the vacant seat I might have occupied—the untuned harp I might have strung. But here I am in hell! the place of which I so often heard, but to which I never for a moment meant to come. Yet here I am at last, a hopeless, accursed, despairing exile from all good: the enemy of my God, the victim of my own impenitence, the murderer of my own soul, —lost! forever lost! Oh! that the humblest saint in heaven might bring me but one drop of water, to cool my burning tongue!

My unconverted hearer, are these pictures real or not? They are as certainly real and true as that the Word of God is real and true; and being so, your soul is in jeopardy every hour. Nothing but the slender thread of life holds you one moment from the world of torment. Let that thread be cut, and all this will become a terrible reality to you in a single hour.

I forewarn you of it *now*, while you can escape, and I implore you to heed the warning, and take refuge in Christ. Go to him in penitence and contrition—go as a perishing sinner,—go at once, and you are safe.

SERMON DIII.

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ROME, NEW YORK.

THE CHRISTIAN AS A REFORMER.

"Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."—EPHESIANS, 5 : 11.

ALL men ought to labor and pray for the extinction of evil and the prevalence of good. What all men ought to do the Christian endeavors to effect. When sins are on every hand thrusting up their horrid fronts, unabashed and bare, or are marking their deformity under the seemly guise of some pretended good, the child of God will not fail to cry, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And such an inquiry has peculiar significance at a time like this, when Christians have been led to see that their relations extend far beyond their parish or vicinity: and it is not easy to evade the sense of responsibility by asking, "Who is my neighbor?" To such a prayer for wisdom, the Spirit, through the Apostle, answers in the words of our text, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."

The term "darkness," as used here, means depravity, which is clear from its evident purport in the 8th verse: "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are light in the Lord." The phrase, "works of darkness," consequently signifies sins, the results of moral depravity in general, and no particular class of them rather than another. Well may they be called unfruitful,—for all that shall be finally achieved by those who persist in committing them will be but the negation of good and all hope of good, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power, the undying worm, and the unquenchable fire of Gehenna. These are the fruits of the works of darkness. With regard to them, the Christian's duty is twofold in its aspect,—negative and positive; and in this order let us consider it.

1. Negative.—"Have no fellowship."

There are several kinds of connection with evil and with evil-doers, which may be mistaken for the forbidden fellowship. Consequently the indolent, the man-fearing, and the

man-pleasing, while they see that some connection is clearly allowed in the Bible, may imagine that every species of it, in turn, may be connived at, when convenient. Meanwhile, by a mistake as to the import of the term in question, a conscientious disciple, eager at all risks to clear his skirts of sin, may be so misled as to waste his energies—and then his spirit will deteriorate, and his influence be destroyed. Moreover, the Pharasaical and censorious may so interpret the Word as to feel justified in giving a wide range to the exhibition of their unlovely and invidious spirit towards their erring fellow-men; and then others, irritated by their folly, may rush in the same spirit to the opposite extreme, and surpass them in the absurdity and ferocity with which they will advocate what is wrong.

Thus professors of religion, instead of presenting the dignified spectacle of wise men, by kind discussion and enlightened investigation seeking to unite on the best means of removing evil, may appear involved in a confused tumult, where the dust of the conflict, and the fantastic tricks of the combatants blind men's eyes to the question at issue: and the attractive Christian graces shrink into oblivion, while wrath, clamor and evil-speaking sweep like a whirlwind over the arena. Instead of trusting to our fallible powers of ratiocination, let us in the light of the Scripture endeavor to discriminate between what is and what is not the fellowship forbidden.

1. All and every kind of intercourse with evil-doers is not included; for we are commanded to *rebuke*, and this implies some intercourse. Besides, we are exhorted to do good unto *all men*, as we have opportunity.

2. All *friendly* intercourse with even gross sinners is not prohibited. Out Saviour sat at meal with publicans and sinners and Pharisees; and Paul instructs Christians how to conduct themselves when invited to a feast by an unbeliever; and in 1 Cor. 5: 10, expressly says, that they cannot avoid the company of grossly wicked men who are unbelievers, "for then must ye needs go out of the world." It may be noted that the self-banishment of the ascetic is treated by the Apostle as a thing entirely out of the question.

3. All *business* intercourse is not interdicted. In 1 Cor. 10: 25, permission, and even advice is given: "whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no questions for conscience sake;' and that too, when the buying of the article in question might well be thought to encourage idolatry, for the heathen priests were accustomed to sell in the shambles meat that had been sacrificed to idols, and thus converted it into a source of revenue and reward for their idol service.

4. The discharge of the relative duties which arise out of the family relation is not included in the prohibition. The connection of consanguinity is not to be disregarded or dis-

reputed. The reciprocal obligations of parent and child, for instance, remain unimpaired, though the one remain a sinner, while the other becomes a saint. Even where the connection arises on voluntary compact, and one of the parties subsequently becomes a Christian, the continuance of the relation and of its duties is so far from being forbidden, that it is even enjoined, although under the Mosaic law such ties were sundered. The difference between the two dispensations in this matter is explained by the fact, that the former was partly national, and had for its object the preservation of religious truth rather than its diffusion, which last is the characteristic aim of the gospel; and this appears in the reason adduced by the Apostle: "For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?"—1 Cor, 7: 16.

5. Civil connection with *wicked governments* is not forbidden. Subjection to rulers is permitted and directed by the precept of Paul, in Rom. 13: 1, "Let every soul be subject to the powers that be." It is also sanctioned by the example of Christ. A state of mind and a course of conduct consistent with this relation is urged by Jeremiah, upon the captive Jews in Babylon, that metropolis of vice and oppression: "Seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray unto the Lord for it; for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace." —Jer. 29: 7.—*Respect* to magistrates is also enjoined by Paul and Peter. "Honor the king," is the phrase used by the latter—meaning any supreme magistrate. Paul, when on trial before Festus, calls him "most noble," even when rudely interrupted by him; and although the character of Festus was certainly no ways remarkable for virtue.

Tribute also is to be paid, though the government be unjust; though it be a supporter of idolatry, and oppressive in its rule, as was that of the Romans over the Jews; yet Christ paid his tax to Cæsar. It is allowed to hold office under a wicked government. Joseph held office under the despot of Egypt. Daniel did likewise under the kings of Babylon and Persia, and while so doing was greeted by the angel with the title "well-beloved," and a miracle was wrought for his delivery from the lions, when cast into their den. When Sergius Paulus was converted, we do not learn that he resigned his office, nor that any such thing was ever expected from a convert.

6. Not all *ecclesiastical* connection with wrong-doers is forbidden. Where there is room for honest intention on either side, such connection may be continued indefinitely, as may be seen in Paul's decision on certain controverted points in Rom. 14. Where a church-member is clearly in the wrong, it is necessary to wait until appropriate efforts for reclaiming the offender have been faithfully tried, and

have not met with the desired result;—where even the church at large may be persuaded that an individual member has not the spirit of Christ, but yet his general conduct may be such that no overt act can be proved against him. To exclude a member in such a case would be to hazard the good name of all, for every one is liable to misconstruction. Besides, our Saviour insists on every word being *established;* and for this end it is necessary not only that the witnesses be credible, but that the charge be based on *facts* capable of proof. An adherence to this rule may often seem vexatious in the case of an individual concerning whose character a series of peculiar ambiguous actions may present an accumulative evidence which will leave but little room for a rational hope in his favor, while he manages after all to keep on the right side of church as well as state law; but it will be best to leave the matter to the decision of the all-seeing Judge, who trieth the reins and the heart.

Where the friends of the right, in a given case, are in a minority, and therefore powerless as to direct action, they are not guilty in retaining their ecclesiastical connection with wrong-doers, so long as they maintain their testimony. In Matt. 23 : 2, 3, our Saviour thus advises his disciples : "The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works; for they say and do not." The character of these teachers is condemned; but as his disciples could not displace them, let them bide their time, attend on their synagogue ministry, for they sit in Moses' seat, *i. e.* teach his doctrines, and so are orthodox, though not orthoprax; and let the hearers practice the duties which the preachers neglect. In John's gospel, 16 : 2, Jesus forewarns his disciples : "They shall put you out of the synagogues." Now they could not have been expelled from the synagogues unless they had remained in them. It is needless to expatiate on the character of the Jews who constituted their synagogues. But it may be asked whether there is any instance of a righteous minority continuing, without reproach, and with the sanction of Christ, in connection with a corrupt Christian church? For an answer to this question we may refer to the case of the church at Sardis. By Him who hath the seven stars it is denounced as "dead." Yet saith He, "thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy." If all those who remain in connection with a corrupt church are necessarily contaminated, how could any have remained in the *dead* church of Sardis "who had not defiled their garments?' It is worthy of remark too, that they are not warned to come out of the corrupt connection.

This case is so extreme that some may think it proves too

much. Yet there it is, Scripture and fact. But does not the Scripture ask, "What concord hath Christ with Belial?" Yes; and the same Scripture advises the desciples to remain in the synagogues, and approves the minority of Sardis. The inconsistency, then, is only apparent, and not real; and we must acquiesce in it, though we should be unable to explain it. But there are two principles wich reconcile the seeming discrepancy. 1. This is a state of remedial probation, a dispensation of grace, an economy of mercy, in which sinners are permitted to exist and enjoy many blessings that they may have an opportunity of receiving the overtures of Divine grace, and of returning to their allegiance; and God requires that His children shall be co-workers with Him, not only in regard to the object in view, but also with reference to the mode of action. It is our duty, therefore, so far as is lawful, to preserve access to our fellow-men, and not to repel them. Again, the measure of responsibility is power, and consequently a duty may be incumbent on a majority, which a minority cannot, and, therefore, need not perform.

But are not God's people expressly commanded to "come out of Babylon?" This command, wherever it is uttered in the Bible, is given prophetically, intimating that there will be a particular juncture when Israel shall "come out." In the Old Testament prophecies it is to be understood literally; and the time came when Providence called the Jews forth from Babylon. But be it remembered that the same prophet who predicts this event, also exhorts his captive countrymen to pray for the peace of that very city, and tells them they shall leave only at the end of seventy years. Where the same language is used in the Apocalypse, it plainly refers to a Providential call, such as summoned Luther from the Papacy, or the English non-conformists from under a tyrannical papacy. Such a call is clear enough when a man cannot retain his connection without perpetrating some wrong, or formally acknowledging some error to be truth, or some wickedness to be right. He who commends the minority in the dead church of Sardis will, at the proper time, call his people out of Babylon. It needs not to be said that though a church may be marred by some errors or even gross corruptions, we are not warranted for that reason lightly to write its epitaph as "dead," or to denounce it as "Babylon."

Having seen that there are some things which are not to be understood as the fellowship forbidden, let us inquire in what it does consist.

1. It plainly includes the direct commission of sin.

2. It occurs in the support of others in the commission of wrong, when we employ them or supply them with the means of some iniquitous purpose, and that whether we de-

sire its commission for its own sake, or for the sake of something else in which we may be interested; as when Pilate assisted the Jews to effect the crucifixion of Jesus, for the sake of avoiding the displeasure of the emperor, which might have been easily aroused by their malicious representation, had he disappointed them of their victim.

3. Iniquity is fellowshiped when wrong is justified as right; when sweet is called bitter, and bitter sweet; when darkness is called light, and light darkness.

4. The same thing takes place when men support wrong *on the whole*. This is done by endeavoring to produce an under estimate of the wrong itself; or by urging its necessity or expediency, as if Providence compelled us to sin; or by exonerating the offender, as when the guilt is imputed where it does not belong, or is charged to a source which cannot be made responsible, such as society at large, or the circumstances which it is said have made the offender what he is. Iniquity is supported on the whole, moreover, when the character of the offender is sanctioned in full; as when the people, or whoever may have the power, confer public honor on some prominent transgressor; or when a church retains within her bosom a known irreclaimable offender. In the 2d chap. of Revelation, the church at Pergamos, and that at Thyatyra, are rebuked for allowing certain profligate heretics to remain in their communion; and while they are highly commended for various excellencies, yet are they threatened with terrible judgments for this fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. It is remarkable, too, that this rebuke and denunciation immediately precedes the commendation of the few names of the church in Sardis who had not defiled their garments; and thus are the re-comparative responsibilities of majorities and minorities signally illustrated. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches."

Again, we may on the whole support iniquity by preserving that willful silence which gives consent. Indeed, some evils, if not all, are more effectually encouraged in this way than in any other; for the clamorous advocate of any sin excites attention to it, and provokes discussion, which is most hurtful to error. But when a dead silence is observed, a whole community may be poisoned by the moral malaria exhaled from the stagnant fen of undisturbed habitual wrong. While men sleep, the enemy sows tares. The hands of evil doers are wonderfully strengthened by this mode of procedure, or rather non-procedure, on the part of those whose duty it is to lift up a warning voice. Either their consciences are lulled to sleep, or they are emboldened by a sense of power on their side, which, as they believe, awes the friends of truth into into dumb submission.

Fearful is the peril thus incurred by the carelessly or studi-

ously silent; yet many and plausible are the temptations to pursue such a course; and to these temptations are ministers of the gospel especially exposed. They see the folly of intemperate reproaches. Offenders may attempt to awe them by threats or to conciliate them by caresses. The rebukes of conscience may be pacified, though her approval be not secured; while her demands are met by the specious evasion of preaching general truths, and these, if the transgressor will take the trouble, he may apply to his own particular case. They must seek peace with all men. They can do a man no good by enr ging him. Cannot they preach Christ and him crucified? Is it not enough to call on men to repent and turn to God, since good actions will naturally proceed from a good heart? These and such like considerations have much weight, because though greatly alloyed with error, they still retain so much of truth as to look like the pure metal: while for that very reason they are the more dangerous counterfeits. God hath warned the watchman—let him beware.

Let us then give such heed to the principle of remedial probation as not to isolate ourselves; nor attempt what is out of our power. But let us keep our hands clean from sin, and take heed that we do not assist others to do wrong by supplying the requisite means, by sanctioning its commission, or by willfully winking at its perpetration.

II. Let us now consider our positive duty as enjoined in the text. Many seem to imagine that to reproach is to reprove. Their impressions, their opinions, their conclusions, they strongly feel and strongly utter. Their trumpet gives no uncertain sound; and if the signal is not instantly obeyed, it is only because its authority is not acknowledged. Often in such a case will the disappointed zealot solve the problem of his disappointment by at once referring it to the depravity of mankind; and if among those who will not heed him there are any professors of religion, he will denounce them either as hypocrites who will not do right, or as too obtuse in their intellects to understand their duty; and it must be owned that there are enough of both these classes to give a show of plausibility to the conclusion. Indeed he may ask: "To what other conclusion can I come? is not my warning signal the echo of reason and conscience?" Be this granted; and still there is room to hope that among those who heard but heeded not, there may be some who are neither too knavish to obey, nor too foolish to understand the demands of reason. Too frequently the tones of her voice are confused by reason of the discordant medium through which they may be uttered; and it is not strange, however much to be deplored, that they should therefore be unheeded.

In all attempts at reformation, then, we should assert the dictates of reason so that men shall feel her authority; and take heed not to supply them through our folly with any plausible excuses for trampling on their obligations. A proper understanding of the word "Reprove" will furnish us with a clue to guide us to this end. The term implies an appeal to the understanding of the evil-doer—to convince him by proving that his course is one of wickedness and folly—to arouse his sense of right, and not to irritate his sensibility to obloquy and scorn. How different this from mere reiterated denunciations, uncommended by kindness and unsupported by proof; or if proof be adduced, only in such a manner as will inevitably harden the heart to resistance!

To discharge this duty it is requisite,

1. To understand ourselves—"Know thyself," says the heathen oracle. "Examine yourself," "Keep thy heart with all diligence," are the injunctions of holy writ. In attaining this knowledge we shall find ourselves to be frail; and so shall be led to bear with our erring fellows; and shall feel too deeply the impropriety of self-righteous arrogance to be guilty of it. We shall, moreover, ascertain our powers, and the better understand how to exert them. We shall also appreciate more clearly our dependence on God, and so shall the more earnestly seek the guidance of his wisdom and the aid of his power; and He giveth liberally and upbraideth not.

2. We should understand our position. Indeed, without understanding this we cannot well understand ourselves. It is needful to examine our position in social life, in the church, and in all our business and political relations. A man may safely and successfully attempt that, in one set of circumstances, to aim at which, under other circumstances, would be both useless and injurious. The reproof of Nathan, if it had been uttered by Joab, would probably have awakened David to fury rather than to repentance; and that unscrupulous but wily courtier well understood the value of this point of policy when he commissioned the woman of Tekoah to deal with the king instead of himself approaching him on the subject of Absalom's return. The honest Christian may learn a lesson from the crafty politician as well as from the unjust steward. Our duty is to do good as we have opportunity; and our opportunities are very materially modified if not created by our position: and while that depends greatly on outward circumstances, yet as much, yea far more does it depend on our own spirit and character as developed in them. Now, on a careful consideration of himself and his circumstances in relation to others, a true disciple may conclude, and that correctly, that some with whom he is living in contact are beyond his influence; and such there may be

without any fault of his own; witness what the Scriptures advise concerning scorners, dogs, and swine. But even such evil-doers should be reproved; and reproved most emphatically they are by the silence of him who bears a faithful and consistent testimony against sin wherever he can, in the sphere of his influence. The silence of such a one toward an evil-doer speaks most loudly of his utter depravity; and thus we find the Scriptures reconciled which in one place command us in any wise to rebuke our neighbor, and elsewhere direct us not to reprove a scorner. A virulent opposer of religion has sometimes been brought to reflection and penitence by the significant silence of Christians at a time when it was well known that they were urging their neighbors on every hand to come to Christ. Such cases, however, are rare; and frequently we may induce others to exert a beneficial influence where any direct effort of our own would be lost. We should, however, be especially careful that our position be as favorable as possible in relation to wrong-doers; as Paul was made all things to all men so as to save some. It should be remembered, moreover, that, apart from moral influence, wealth, office, and civil rights confer power to encourage what is for good and to restrain whatever tends to evil; and such power we ought thus to exert.

3. It is necessary that we understand those whom we would reform. We must understand human nature both in the general and in the particular. Some may have correct and profound notions of man; but when they would labor with men for their good, they waste their efforts through lack of a proper perception of the peculiarities of individual character. Others are accurate in their cognizance of peculiarities, but this alone is useless; for great is human nature. Its wants, its sins, its capacities, its dangers, and its hopes are great; and the small tactics of the store, the court-house, or the saloon, are not the strategy required in the grand operations of intellectual and moral warfare. The partizan is not the general. He who wisely seeks the improvement of mankind will unite both kinds of knowledge, so that the wheels of a noble enterprise need not be thrown off the track through encountering some pebble of petty prejudice which might have been removed by gentle means with little trouble. The wise reformer will remember, that men are led by their feelings quite as much as by their reason; and he will endeavor to enlist their affections in his favor, and so in favor of Truth.

4. We should be acquainted with the *position of the wrong-doer*. We should inquire into the circumstances that have led him astray, the opportunities of knowledge which he may have had, the influences which now hinder his amendment, and especially those which may favor the access of truth to

his mind, and consequently his restoration to virtue and religion. In thus doing we should give special heed to his relation to ourselves.

Having thus taken a survey of the field and the means of action, we must *speak and act the Truth* with that kindness and compassion which seeks to redeem rather than to punish, which desires neither to draw down the fire of Heaven nor to shed the venom of acrimonious reproaches on the offender's head, though he may richly deserve it, if by forbearance he may be won. We shall deny ourselves even the comfort of expressing a holy indignation. Our rebukes, though sharp as in cases of the *certain* style of character they should be, will be uttered more in sorrow than in anger. We shall exhibit that meekness of charity which beareth and that candor which hopeth all things. We shall exercise that patience which endures insult and injury, and that courage and fortitude which will certainly reiterate their attempts until the work be done, and the stronghold captured. In all this we shall exercise a holy prudence, a careful adaptation of the means to the end; for, although we are not responsible for success, our great Captain demands of us that we do not fail through our own fault. Nathan was faithful in the application of his parable; but he was prudent in securing a concession of the principle before he said, "Thou art the man." Paul was faithful in warning the Athenians; but he was prudent in availing himself of every point which was common ground to him and them.

Wisdom is profitable to direct in this as in all other duties; and wisdom is needed; for, although the simple principle of love, which is the fulfilling of the whole law, may be readily understood, like that of gravitation, yet how diversified and complicated are its operations! The course of duty in each case, is, so to speak, the resultant of various moral forces, and to ascertain it we need a calculation beyond all that our guesses at expediency can furnish. The Bible pronounces a woe on those who lean to their own understanding; and this some do most evidently in preferring what appears their own interest to God's high behests. There are others, however, who often make a great outcry at this sin, and yet are guilty of it in another way. They are generally persons possessed of some logical powers, and measurably devoid of that species of selfishness which would lead them to consult their own ease and comfort. They are not men-pleasers, neither are they lovers of pleasure rather than of God. They seize on some one or two points clearly laid down in the Scriptures. From these they draw their conclusions; and these become their convictions, and to them they resolutely cling. In them they hear the very voice of God, and that they will follow to consequences at which one would suppose they would shrink back aghast. Thus they "please not God,

and are contrary to all men." They are illustrations of the difference between *mere* logic and common sense. Logic draws conclusions from one or two premises ; while common sense looks at a larger number, and would look at *everything that is to be taken into account.* Now, if the expression be allowable, God is a being of infinite common sense. He surveys the whole ground and sees the end from the beginning ; and he has given us not only his law, but precepts, statutes, testimonies and judgments—applications of the great general principles of his government. We should search the Scriptures, then, not only for the grand truths,which are the basis of every duty, but for those specific directions which are given to guide us in the various departments of human action. In looking for such directions, we shall find that the Divine arrangements and precepts are consistent with the fact that large masses move slow in morals as well as in physics ; that a movement toward reform is gradually propagated through a large community, unless by some special intervention of his Spirit, "a nation shall be born in a day." A steady and patient effort of the motive power will produce the desired effect ; while an impatient jerk may snap the connection, and so nothing be done.

Be it remembered however, that much as the errors of misguided zealots in urging reform are to be regretted, the virulence of those who befriend iniquity is to be abhorred, and their obstinacy lamented, while the lukewarmness of so-called neutrals, is still more to be deplored, if not despised. Ciphers they are, but ciphers that hugely swell the amount of wrong. "I would thou wert either hot or cold."

Nor should we forget that it is not to be taken for granted that the reformer is in the wrong merely because he is persecuted : for then Paul had never been molested nor Jesus crucified.

Be it remembered also in humility and thankfulness, that our Heavenly Father looks with a benignant and watchful eye upon his children ; that he will reward their honest endeavors while he chastises their follies ; that he will at last abundantly pardon the believers, and though they may have been engaged in many a hot contention here on earth, He will gather them at last into the bosom of eternal rest. There all shall be truth, and love, and joy. There shall be no misunderstanding, no deceit, no sin. If this were more constantly in the mind of God's children, they would be more careful to abstain from evil, and from judging one another. And the church of Christ would present a spectacle of good-will, peace, purity, and holy zeal, far more attractive than it has yet been our lot to behold.

May the Holy Spirit convince the world of sin and righteousness and judgment, until all men shall do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before their God.

CHRIST A PRECIOUS SAVIOUR.—BY THE EDITOR.

"Unto you therefore which believe he is precious."—1 PETER, 2 : 7.

THE great end and business of the Scriptures are, to reveal Christ. They set Him forth in his person—in his mission—in his office of work—in his life, sufferings, and death—in his humiliation and in his glory, with amazing distinctness and power of interest, and challenge for him the belief and cordial acceptance of all men. And yet, millions of sinners, whom he came to relieve and to bless, know him not and are utter strangers to his salvation. They have heard of Christ by the hearing of the ear, and have read about him often, but have never taken him into their hearts,—feel no regard for him,—know nothing of the doctrine of a precious Saviour. To them the Bible reveals no divine Jesus; for them there is no salvation. Heaven's Glory and earth's Redeemer, has no attractions for them. Alas! that this should be true of most Gospel sinners.

But there are a few souls on earth to whom Jesus is precious—inexpressibly precious: precious in his own matchless and exalted character: precious in His Word which reveals him: precious in his providence which bears constant testimony to his kindness and faithfulness; precious in his example of all virtue and benevolence: precious in his extreme humiliation as "a man of sorrows," and as the sufferer of Calvary: and precious in his exaltation and exceeding glory. They have seen Jesus in all his divine attractions—have tasted of his love—have experienced his renewing grace—have enjoyed the most intimate communion with him and to them there is no being like Jesus. "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee," is the language of their daily experience. Christ and his cross are all their theme—their song in the house of their pilgrimage. "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious." Consider—

I. To *whom* Christ is precious. "Unto you therefore which *believe* he is precious." He is precious to none else. There are many characters found in this world, but Jesus Christ passes them all by, and reveals himself only to the humble and contrite soul—to that man who believes and trembles at his Word. He who has FAITH—faith in the Gospel,—the faith appropriate to him as a sinner, and to Christ as an all-sufficient Saviour, is sure to find Christ inexpressibly dear to him. He may be deficient in learning, in worldly advantages, in everything beside, but if he really "believe with the heart unto righteousness," Jesus Christ has been formed in him the hope of glory, and reveals himself to him in the efficacy and preciousness of his Grace.

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear!
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear.

It makes the wounded Spirit whole,
It calms the troubled breast;
'Tis manna to the hungry soul,
And to the weary rest.

God honors faith. The soul must look to Jesus—trust in him—cast her all upon him, in order to experience the ineffable peace, and consolation, and reward of the Gospel.

II. Why Christ is so precious to the believer. He is seen by him in his glory as revealed by the Spirit of God,—experienced by him in the fulness of his salvation.

1. Christ is recognized by the believer as the medium of all earthly blessings. They are the fruit of His mediation, and flow to him through the channel of redeeming love and covenant grace.

2. As the source of spiritual blessings: pardon of sin—reconciliation with God—peace of mind—a new heart—a holy life—perseverance unto the end, and final victory in death, and glory beyond,—all come from Christ. He is our life, our hope, our strength, our wisdom, and redemption. We owe to him everything we enjoy and hope for. He has done for us what no other being has done or could do. All his promises are ours. He is present in every conflict to deliver, in every trial to strengthen, in every blessing to enrich, in every duty to quicken, in every chastisement to soothe and sanctify. There are, in what Christ is in himself, and in what he has done for the believer, and will yet do, infinite reasons why he should be precious to him, "the chief among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely." The soul cries to him, and is delivered—looks to him, and is changed into the same image—feeds upon him, and grows up to life everlasting—trusts in him, and finds repose. O, how precious is Jesus to the man who can truly say: "I know that my Redeemer is mine and I am his." Compared with what he finds in Christ, all earthly good is insipid and vain. Christ alone is precious. And he is precious as a Saviour, to deliver and pardon—as a Friend, to counsel and sympathize—as a Teacher, to instruct and guide—as a Benefactor, to nourish and bless—as a Refuge, to afford safety and repose—as an almighty Deliverer, to bring the soul off conqueror over death and the grave.

III. *When* Christ is thus precious.

At *all times*—for He is always equally lovely and adorable, always equally nigh and rich in blessing, and the soul is always equally in need of him and satisfied with him. But more especially—

1. In certain *frames of mind*, as, when the soul hungers and thirsts after righteousness; when it experiences anew the emptiness of all earthly good, and turns to God with longing desires; after a season of spiritual darkness and conflict, when the light of God's countenance is again lifted up upon the soul, *and the joy of his salvation restored*; and

when faith, overcoming its wonted weakness, and rising above the regions of doubt and uncertainty, attains to full assurance. In such states of mind the face of Jesus shines with ineffable sweetness and glory, in the believer's soul, and all is peace and joy. Like the disciples on the mount of transfiguration, he would evermore abide in this heavenly frame of mind, and gaze and gaze eternally on the unveiled and transcendent glories of his Redeemer.

2. In certain *duties*, as in secret prayer—in the worship of the sanctuary—in remembering Christ's dying love at his table—in visiting the sick, the poor, and the needy, to relieve their wants, and to make Jesus known to them—and in sacrifices for the cause of God and the salvation of souls.

2. In certain *seasons*, as in times of danger, in the hour of bereavement, in the day of sickness and trial, and more than all, in the hour of death. Oh! how unspeakably precious has Christ been found to millions of believing souls, when all earthly comforts have fled, and the soul has felt the pressure of an infinite emergency! Language is inadequate to do justice to their experience at such times. Thier peace is like a river, their victory complete.

"If such the sweetness of the streams, &c.

1. How much we need such a Saviour in this world of sin and sorrow: an Almighty hand to pluck us from ruin; an infinite righteousness to justify us with God; the Word and Spirit of the Holy One to enlighten and sanctify us; a refuge from earth's sorrows and calamities, and the pledges and mercies of an "everlasting covenant" to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless, with exceeding joy, before the Throne.

2. If this Jesus is not precious to you, my hearer, it is because you do not believe in him. The Scriptures reveal him to you; the Holy Spirit would draw you to him. Open your eyes and behold the matchless One! open your heart and feel the power of his love. Jesus is precious; do you not know it? Jesus is precious, and will you live disconsolate and die in misery?

Finally—Behold the reward of faith. All this comes from believing. What a reward! What can equal it! The man to whom Jesus Christ is really precious, is favored above all men. His heart knows the secret of all happiness; the secret of right living, and of a peaceful, happy death. What would you not give to know that secret? At what sacrifices would you not *buy* inward peace, triumph over death, salvation from hell? Only *believe*—believe in Jesus—the Jesus of the Scriptures—the Jesus of whom you have heard and read so often, and yet do not know; believe in Him, and you shall have peace, joy, victory, eternal life, glory unspeakable! The Lord give you faith.

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THE AGGRESSIVE POWER OF CHRISTIANITY.

"Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word."—Acts 8: 4.

Our text carries us back to days of persecution for the Word's sake. The empire which Satan had so long held was now rapidly waning before the power of the Cross, and "he came down in great wrath because his time was short." But his devices against the truth were vain. The cause of righteousness gained ground daily: it gained fresh strength from fresh opposition. Converts to Christ were multiplied even around the stake; and the agents in this work of intended extermination were made to see that all their apparent victories were really defeats. "The blood of martyrs proved the seed of the church." One reason for this is intimated by the fact stated in the text, "They that were scattered abroad went everywhere," and wherever they went they acted out their religion —publishing with their lips, and enforcing by their lives, the gospel of the grace of God. From this statement, I deduce the doctrine of this discourse—That it is *preeminently by aggressive movements that the Church is to prosper.* By this means she is to maintain spiritual life in her own soul—cause religion to flourish at home, and extend its triumphs abroad.

1. The truth of this doctrine is suggested by the first impul-

ses of the religious principle, the spirit of love in every Christian's bosom.

False religionists, both among Pagans and nominal Christians, have, I know, taught that piety was a kind of dormant, contemplative spirit; that its power was to be manifested in patient endurance rather than holy action; in a voluntary withdrawment from the world, to avoid its contaminations, rather than in resolute efforts to make the world better. This was a leading feature in the ancient stoical philosophy. The same idea is incorporated into several of the religious systems prevelent in the East at the present day. It is this false notion, in nominally Christian churches, that has sent thousands of self-deceived, and, no doubt, some truly good men, into the seclusion of the cloister, to spend their days in penances and prayers, rather than in executing plans of benevolent effort. Now it is not the true spirit of religion, but the want of it that leads to such erroneous views of Christian duty. The unsophisticated promptings of the new-born soul are always to active effort for God. This is strikingly exhibited in young converts. It is illustrated with great beauty in the conduct of Christ's earliest disciples. So it must be; for true religion is the spirit of Christ. It looks with pain upon the amazing evils of sin, under whatever form they may appear. It sees the world lying in wickedness; and it is not satisfied with sighing over its miseries. Its language is, *something must be done*. It conceives plans, it demands efforts, for the world's conversion. Every real Christian that lives in the spirit of religion may consult his own consciousness on this subject. In his most favored hours and nearest approaches to God, he will find his impulses to religious effort strongest. The history of the apostles and primitive Christians confirm this view.

Take up the lives also of eminently holy men in later times —Baxter, Brainard, Martyn, Payson. At the moment of meditating these thoughts, I open Payson's Memoirs lying before me, and one of the first sentences that meets my eye, in his private Diary, reads thus: "Enjoyed this morning endeared communion with God—felt his love constraining me, and had such desire for the salvation of souls that I could not rest at home—felt that I must go out and stir up Christians to pray, and exhort sinners to repent." What an impressive illustration of the truth of our doctrine; and, let me add, of the identity of true religion in all ages of the church. Payson's religion is seen working out precisely the same results with that of those persecuted refugees referred to in our text. Such coincidences have a wonderful power to strengthen our faith in the reality of religion as a Divine principle, and they ought to be used as a searching test of the genuineness of our own professions of it.

2. The doctrine I have stated further appears from the fact

that truth is the grand instrument which God employs to overthrow the kingdom of Satan, and advance and establish the kingdom of His Son. Now we know that the truth can be available for this high end, only as it is brought into contact with the human mind; and this, of course, involves a great enterprise on the part of the church of the very character spoken of in the text. The Word of God must not only be translated into all the languages of the earth, but it must be carried to every man's door; nay its truths must be pressed home upon every man's conscience. What a mighty work here opens for Christians of every name; it is, moreover, eminently an aggressive work, a missionary movement. How are they to accomplish it by shutting themselves up in nunneries and cloisters, and giving themselves up to divine contemplations? Is this the way to cause their light so "to shine before men, that they, seeing their good works, may glorify their Father in heaven?" Alas for the preposterous teachings of a perverted Christianity!

Surely there are facts enough before the church to show her that the strongholds of error and sin cannot be demolished by sighs and prayers alone. They are not to fall down before her as the walls of Jericho fell before Israel of old, at the sound of a trumpet. The Captain of her salvation has seen fit to appoint other means of success—means which must task all her energies, and demand all her resources—her resources of men and of money, of talent and of influence,

> "Her power to suffer,
> And her will to serve."

3. Again: Both the necessity and the vital importance of the aggressive movements of the church appears from the very attitude of a fallen world toward God. It is one of hostility to His character, and opposition to His truth. I know there are those who love to represent the human heart as favorably disposed toward God and his gospel. Their theory is that all which men need is light—a fair and liberal presentation of the truth to the mind. But on what page of the Scriptures is this flattering picture of our nature drawn? Does not the divine Teacher himself say: "He that doeth evil hateth the light;" and again, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Hence the darkness that overspreads the earth—the gross darkness that covers the people; and mark, this darkness is not confined to this or to that place, but it is, to a deplorable extent, in every place. It is in every city and village, in every house and heart. Even the children of light, how often does obscurity brood over their minds and sadden their hearts! They have need to be exhorted to cast off

the darkness and its works, to put on the armor of light and walk as children of the light and the day. Does not this moral condition of the race indicate plainly the duty of the church?

The Bible teaches doctrines and records facts. It seldom makes direct appeals, and still more rarely pursues a course of reasoning for the purpose of enforcing duty. This is the business of the church. God knew our active natures, and he has prepared work for us suited to develop and strengthen all our faculties and all our Christian graces. The world will not come to the church and crave instruction at her lips. As her Saviour sought *her*, so He requires her to seek sinners. In other words, she must make external and aggressive movements. She must not study so much her own comfort as her enlargement. And this general rule of duty for the church as a body, applies to each member of the church individually. So Christ teaches. The man who wandered among the tombs, a miserable victim of Satan's power, having become the happy subject of the Saviour's mercy, desired to follow in His train. But no, it was not for him the sphere of greatest usefulness. Hence the direction given to him; "Return to thy house;" or, as Mark's gospel has it, "Go home to thy friends and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and had mercy on thee."

4. The whole current of Scripture precept and representation is in perfect accordance with this view of the subject. The Bible never instructs the church, that she is to conquer the world by her passive virtues, nor by any means which aim chiefly at conservation rather than aggression.

Look at Christ's own instructions on this subject. His immediate disciples are not permitted to remain permanently with him. They are in His family, temporarily, and for a specific purpose. They are to be fitted for their great work as ambassadors for God. The moment this is accomplished, their divine Teacher sends them forth into all the cities of Judea, to preach repentance, and warn the people "to flee from the wrath to come." Call to mind also his last command: "Go teach all nations;"—"go ye into all the earth, and preach the gospel to every creature." "My religion is as leaven: its first movements are silent and apparently feeble, but it is in its nature an active, all-pervading principle. It moves forward to a mighty consummation. It shall, ere long, fill the world with righteousness and peace."

5. The entire history of the gospel confirms this view of the subject. When has any signal advance been made in the work of human salvation, except by a movement similar to that described in the text? The very foundations of hope towards God were laid in our world by a stupendous movement of this very character. Christ's great redeeming enterprise—what *was it but one* of agression? What, but the boundless bene-

volence of Heaven bearing down upon the dominions of sin and darkness, in this apostate world? His mission was gratuitous on God's part, and unwelcome on ours. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." Look at his whole career from the manger to the cross. It was a missionary career. He left the hallowed places of the temple, and his sweet retreats for meditation and prayer, amid the olive groves that were round about Jerusalem, and sought out, often at the hazard of his life, the miserable victims of disease and sin. He traversed various portions of Judea again and again, journeying on foot, "without a home of his own," and as he himself affectingly says, "without a place to lay his head." The Evangelical record describes his manner of life in one short sentence: "He went about doing good."

The Mosaic institution was peculiar. It was conservative rather than aggressive. It did not, indeed, repel the proselyte from Paganism, when he came to the gate of Zion, and knocked for admission; but it did not go out after the wanderer to bring him to the fold of God. It was the mysterious arrangement of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own glorious will. Still it was true *then* as now, that religion made no decided progress, even in Israel, except as the servants of the Lord made specific movements for this purpose. To this end pious kings and holy prophets must be raised up to unite their efforts in reviving and extending the work and worship of the true God. The feasts must all be kept; the daily sacrifices offered, and the law publicly explained and enforced.

In times of growing declension and abounding wickedness, some Elijah must come forth to warn the wicked of their wicked ways—to stand in the breach and roll back the outbreaking tide of iniquity and death: the bulwarks of idolatry must be assaulted, and all the faithful must unite their efforts, calling on God, and putting their hands to the work of reform. Piety may retire to the caves of the earth, and weep her life out in secret places. It is all in vain: the abomination of desolation will spread wider and wider; false prophets will multiply in numbers, and grow bolder in blasphemy, until not only the holy city, but the holy temple, shall have become a den of iniquity. No, religion must not retire from the field, nor be content to occupy only neutral ground. She must make an aggressive movement or all is lost. Some Nehemiah must rouse and lead that remnant of God's host that has not bowed the knee to Baal; and pressing on from conquering to conquer, must, in the name of the Lord of Hosts, achieve the victory.

If this aspect of things strikes us in the history of the Old Testament dispensation, how much more in that of the New? Mark how faithfully the first preachers of the gospel carried out their Divine commission. They began, as directed, at Jerusalem. But having set up thousands of trophies to the

power of the truth at that central point, they took up the standard of the cross and bore it in triumph round the globe. They traveled from city to city, and from region to region; and everywhere they acted aggressively. They assailed pagan superstition in all its strongholds; they overturned its altars of blood; they cast down its false gods, and called its deluded votaries to repentance—exhorting them "to turn from these dumb idols, to serve the living God." It was thus that the apostles, their coadjuters and successors conquered the earth for Christ. Thus they subdued all nations to the obedience of faith, until shouts of victory and songs of deliverance went up to Heaven from a regenerated world.

Turn to a still later page in the history of the church. How was it at the Reformation? Luther was a monk, shut up in a cloister. There, as he read his Latin Bible, the grace of God touched his heart. The scales of error fell from his eyes, as they did from the eyes of Saul of Tarsus. Having received the great doctrine of Justification by Faith, he rose upon Germany as a new and glorious star. He went forth as the sun when he shineth in his strength. By God's help he rolled away the thick darkness of ages, and filled Europe with intellectual and spiritual light. But mark, this great work was not affected, chiefly, by the prayers of the cloister, but by many a hard-fought battle for God and his truth, in the open field.

At length the zeal of the Reformers declined; their missionary movements were remitted. Then the cause of truth began to lose ground; and the Protestant church ignobly surrendered field after field which she had so gloriously won. How was it in our mother country at the period when Whitefield and Wesley appeared? The English Church, proud of her strength, had long reposed amid her privileges, surrounded by the defenses and sustained by the aid of the secular arm. She had well-nigh forgotten the very end of her being. Vital piety had declined, until it had become nearly extinct. Then the Spirit of God moved upon the hearts of the devoted men I have just named. They were both young, but they were endued with much of the spirit, if not with all the wisdom of the first preachers of the gospel. It was the missionary spirit, and their movements were missionary movements. Through the impulse which they were chiefly instrumental in imparting, spiritual religion revived and extended both in Britain and our own country, and in all branches of the Evangelical church. So it has ever been; and so, I believe, it will continue to be to the end of the world. Just in proportion as any branch of the Christian church, in the spirit of Christ, attempts spiritual aggression, missionary enterprises, at home and abroad, in the same proportion its interests are smiled upon and prospered. It is seen fulfilling its high destiny.

If these things are so, then our *main* position is established,

namely, that it is chiefly by the external and missionary movements of the church that she is to maintain life and health in her own soul—extend the empire of pure religion abroad, and fill the earth with the light and glory of God.

REMARKS.

1. We see why the church is organized. It is partly for social religious improvement; but this is as a means to an end. It is organized pre-eminently with a view to united and powerful external action. Hence the obligation on all the true friends of Christ to join themselves to some evangelical branch of the church, and to stand fast in the faith and hope of His gospel; that the sacramental host of God's elect being perfectly joined together, hand and heart, may move forward to final and universal triumph.

2. This subject also indicates the grand object of all preaching to the church. It is not chiefly the personal enjoyment of Christians. It is indeed the duty of the spiritual husbandman to cultivate the Lord's vineyard already inclosed; but is not even this in reference chiefly to a higher duty, that of enlarging its borders and causing new plants of righteousness to spring up and bear fruit to His glory?

The late William Ward, so well known as a devoted missionary and an accomplished preacher, in his letters addressed to British and American Christians, suggests his belief that too much of the public preaching of the Sabbath is, in many parts of Protestant Christendom, devoted to the edification of the church, and too little to the conversion of sinners. And he assigns this as one reason why the gospel has hitherto had such limited success. The suggestion from such a quarter should have great weight, and though more applicable perhaps to the British than the American pulpit, is well worthy of being pondered by all.

3. This discussion throws light upon the providences of God towards the church. Now, as in former days, He allows heresies, persecutions, schisms, and various forms of affliction, from time to time, to invade the church. This is *not* because the church is not dear to him, for He hath loved her with a perfect and an everlasting love; but it is because He loves the *end* for which he established her, even more; and this end she has perhaps lost sight of. What was the effect of the persecutions and sufferings alluded to in the text? Plainly to scatter more widely the seed of God's truth, to spread abroad into other regions the gospel of the kingdom, which was shut up mainly within the narrow limits of Judea. The converts at Jerusalem did not even yet fully understand the gospel's glorious mission, and their duty to give it to a lost world. It may

be too, that then as now, Christians loved too well their own ease, and had too little of the self-sacrificing spirit of the Divine Master. They desired inordinately to live at home among their friends and their privileges. Therefore God suffered Satan to stir up the spirit of persecution and "scatter them abroad." Their trials quickened their piety, their love for Christ and for souls; and they went forth everywhere as heralds of salvation, as "burning and shining lights." Look at the schism in the Episcopal Church, incidental to the indefatigable labors of Whitefield and Wesley, already alluded to. Missionary efforts formed no part of their original plan; they were the plan of Providence. Driven by persecution from the churches of that religious establishment to which they belonged, these men of God resorted to field-preaching, for which they were both singularly adapted. By this means their hearers were multiplied a hundred-fold. Was the hand of God ever more plainly visible? Doubtless he saw that that great movement (for it was *great in itself*, and far greater in its consequences) was indispensable to the grand purposes of His mercy, as necessary as the persecution referred to in the text. And who would venture to say that similar schisms may not be necessary in the same church, and in other extended churches in our times, and for substantially the same reasons?

4. This subject throws light upon the melancholy fact, "known and read of all men," that many churches which have numbers, and wealth, and much secular influence, have *no corresponding moral power*. Such instances are, alas! too frequent in our own country, still more frequent in the mother country, and painfully common in all communities especially where the church either leans upon the State or upon treasured funds. Pecuniary burdens are in such cases generally light; and the minister's support is secure, whether he is faithful or unfaithful. Woe to churches and to ministers who are thus at "ease in Zion." A deep spiritual lethargy, like the sleep of death, settles down upon the people. Christians live unto themselves, and care little for others. Selfish and worldly, they make no advances in holiness; sinners remain unreproved and unconverted; "the ways of Zion mourn," her walls moulder, and the gaeat end for which the church exists is defeated. In what sense can it be affirmed of such an association of professing Christians, that they are the "salt of the earth, or the light of the world?" Do they not, rather, painfully verify another declaration of our Lord: "for if the salt hath lost its savor wherewith shall it be salted? it is henceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men." The way of all great apostasies from God and his truth has been prepared by just such churches—churches holding, it may be, substantially an orthodox faith, and having a "name to live," and *nothing but a name*.

Many such churches have become absolutely extinct—nay extended branches of the nominally Christian church formed according to this low standard of duty, have perished and been forgotten. Let us then be warned. The path both of individual and associated piety is the same. In order even to permanent existence, there must be aggressive holy action. The church must not live always in the temple, or abide on the mount, nor even tarry at Jerusalem. Having surveyed the field around her, and lifted up her heart to God for help, she must go forth to self-denying toils and conflicts. The same is true of the individual members of the church; and just in proportion as they resist the claims of duty and withdraw from all active effort for God, their piety withers, and their usefulness declines. Hence the deplorable fact, that in every church so many are found who add to the *numbers*, but not at all to the *strength* or *efficiency* of the church. They might at any time enter the church triumphant, if peradventure the gate of heaven could open wide enough to admit them, and the church militant would not, in her great conflict with sin, miss their influence. Like the retinue of an eastern army, they swell the roll—encumber the camp—impede the march, and in the day of battle they only embarrass the faithful soldier, and insure disaster and discomfiture to the host.

These nominal disciples of Christ may be strictly moral; exact in many duties belonging to their profession, especially those which relate more immediately to themselves. Why, then, are they not useful Christians? Simply because they do not make exertions and sacrifices to carry forward those great Christian enterprises at home and abroad, which bear powerfully on the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and the destinies of men for eternity. When such disciples of Jesus die, who will gather around their graves to moisten them with tears of pious regret? Or who, when they depart, will appear at the gate of glory to welcome them to everlasting habitations?

The story of your religious life will soon be written. It will be summed up chiefly in this: What did he prayerfully attempt for God—what to limit the evils of sin, and diffuse the blessings of salvation? What you have done or humbly aimed to do, for this great consummation, in your own soul, in your family and neighborhood, in the Sabbath-School, in the church, and in the world, that will have a sweet remembrance on earth and an everlasting memorial in heaven. All else will pass into utter oblivion, or be remembered only to diminish the joys or aggravate the woes of an unwasting eternity.

SERMON DV.*

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CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

"Charity never faileth."—1 Cor. 13: 8.

Charity is the very essence of the gospel. As a grace, it is indispensable to Christian character; as an element of usefulness, it is most active and powerful. The more of this lovely spirit we possess, the more we resemble Christ—the nearer approach we make to the society of heaven. Alas! that the world contains so little of it—that Christianity, which in its facts and doctrines embodies it in its highest perfection and furnishes so beautiful an illustration of it, has not had a brighter exemplification in the lives of God's people. Surely it is quite time for the church of the Redeemer to seek a new baptism of this heavenly spirit, and try the power of Christian Charity as a means of convincing and subduing this unbelieving and rebellious world.

We may profitably contemplate the *characteristics* of Christian charity, and the *means* to be used in its cultivation.

1. It is *permanent*. "Charity never faileth." The climax of its excellence is, that it never decays, never dies. Often has the tear been shed over the perishable nature of all earthly objects. And the superior worth of some of these objects presents a painful contrast to their transient duration. Beauty has no charm that will not fade. The proudest monuments of human genius and art soon decay. Walk among the remains of ancient Thebes and Palmyra, and behold what was once the pride and boast of art, now a confused heap of ruins. See this

* Since this sermon was accepted for the Preacher, the Lord, as in a whirlwind, has swept to his rest the beloved author. He brought us the M.S. a few weeks since, and was then full of life and strength; but returning to his people, among whom the pestilence was so awfully raging, he was numbered with its victims. These circumstances seem to warrant a departure from our rule, and lend to this sermon a melancholy interest, and enforce its teachings as by a voice from Heaven.— Ed.

shattered pilaster, that broken column, this beautifully carved chaplet, and that gorgeous, crumbling dome. Alas! that they should be smitten with mortality. If there be laws of reproduction, the laws of change and decay operate with equal certainty and force. Even religion itself does not crown with immortality everything embraced within its glorious economy. Prophecies fail. The visions of the seer have passed away. The gift of inspiration is withheld. Tongues have ceased. Knowledge shall vanish away. Supernatural communications revealing to the mind the predictions, types, and mysteries of religion are withdrawn. But "charity never faileth." It lives in the heart of the redeemed here. It yields its sweetest fruits, and sheds its brightest glories hereafter in its own native climes. Its greatest excellence is its permanence. Even faith, by which we overcome the world, shall be absorbed in sight; and hope, by which we are cheered on our pilgrimage, shall be swallowed up in a glorious fruition; but charity is greater, because it will forever live and reign as the native child, the brightest ornament of the skies.

2. It is a *comprehensive* grace. Its very nature shows that it is designed to embrace in its sympathies the whole human family. It respects the highest good, not of inanimate objects which are incapable of happiness, but of man, and the whole reign of sentient being. The more extensively it operates, the more does it resemble the benevolence of its author, who maketh his sun to shine and his rain to fall upon the evil and upon the good. "For," says Christ, "if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners to receive as much again. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again, and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest; for he is kind unto the unthankful, and to the evil." Thus we are taught that our love and benevolence are not to be limited to those who can reciprocate our kindness. Such benevolence is coexistent with selfishness; sinners exercise it; but that which belongs to the Christian character aims at the good of all, whether good is received from them or not. Nor does it spend itself in mere sighs and good wishes, "be ye warmed and clothed," while no provision is made for the things needed. The true Christian is ready to do his utmost to send the gospel to the destitute, to relieve the distressed, to succor the widow and the orphan, to confirm the doubting, strengthen the weak, encourage the virtuous, and reprove the faulty. In short, he is ready to engage in all the offices of kindness and love, which may promote the present and future good of man, as he has ability and op-

portunity. Every man is his brother, of whatever nation, color or condition.

There is, however, a distinction which God makes, and which he directs us to make. The love of benevolence will lead us to do good unto *all* men; but the love of complacence prompts us to acts of kindness towards the household of faith, because of their faith and moral excellence. To love Christians *as such*, and because they are such. And this is a love which is not confined to names, nor parties, nor sects, nor is it hemmed in by ecclesiastical rules and forms, but extends as far as the spirit, and image, and principles of Christ are found.

3. It is of paramount *importance*. Our Saviour enforced the duty of brotherly love in a new commandment; and enjoined upon mankind the love even of their enemies. He mentions it as the highest qualification of those who shall stand on his right hand, and the want of it as the reason of the dreadful curse that shall be denounced against those on his left, in the day of judgment. Paul declares love to be the fulfilling of the law, and places it first among the fruits of the Spirit. He gives it the preeminence above all other gifts and graces—above the tongues of men and angels—above prophecy and mysteries and knowledge—and even faith and hope. "Now abideth faith, hope, charity; but the *greatest* of these is *charity*." The beloved disciple who lay in the bosom of his Lord and seemed to partake largely of his spirit, tells us that *God is love*. All his other attributes are but the varied modificatinns of his love. Love presides over all his counsels, and directs all his acts. The same apostle asserts that this attribute is an evidence of our being born of God; and its absence of our still abiding in death. He calls him a murderer who hates another; and him a liar who says that he loves God whom he hath not seen, and hates his brother whom he hath seen. Thus Christ and his disciples exhort and teach, that love may continue and abound.

Now, it is not easy to conceive how any honest man can misapprehend and evade these precepts. He can as readily shuffle any other duty enjoined in the Bible. And he who fancies himself a Christian, while he manifests habitually a spirit in direct opposition to true evangelical charity, is willing to lie under a fatal delusion. He takes upon himself the name of Christ and comes under the obligations of discipleship, while he knows nothing of Christianity. For, the duty of Christian charity is not taught in doubtful phrases, in fancied analogies, and far-fetched interpretations; but in plain commands, in frequent, earnest entreties and expostulations. And those who are proof against all these will not be urged to duty by considerations of a moral kind. Hence, however much heat and zeal a man may show in defence of his religious opinions, if they be not kindled by the fire of Christian love, they are fruitless of any good. Men may die martyrs to their opinions,

and they may be styled Christian martyrs, and yet be totally destitute of charity. The apostle declares "Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, I am nothing." It cannot be doubted that the charity of the gospel is absolutely essential to the Christian character. It is the very soul of true piety: the element of heaven.

4. Consider the *moral excellence* of Christian charity. It is the atmosphere which angels, and glorified saints, and all holy beings breathe. It is the virtue which distinguishes them from all other beings. The fallen angels may possess knowledge and power equal to the unfallen, but they are wholly destitute of love and moral excellence. They have the natural, but are destitute of the moral perfections. The celestial inhabitants, on the contrary, live in the enjoyment and exercise of unmingled, uninterrupted love and felicity. Nor is their love confined to the society of the blessed in heaven, but sheds its beams upon this lower world, for they are *ministering spirits* to the heirs of salvation. If there is joy among the angels over the repentance of a sinner, there is complacent love for the saints, and pity for all the rest of the human family. The spirits of the just, as they depart this life, leave behind all their censorious, ungenerous, selfish propensities. Their souls are enlarged, their vision of Divine things is greatly extended, and their love, like a flowing stream, will evermore deepen and widen as it rolls down through eternity.

But this heaven born charity, although its range is as wide as the universe, and its aim is the highest good of all the race, still is by no means blind to error, nor indifferent to immoral conduct. It weeps when men make void the law of God, and rejoices when truth triumphs, holiness is exalted, and God is honored. What exalted benevolence in Moses that should make him willing to be blotted out of God's book rather than that the sin of Israel should not be erased! How disinterested the benevolence of Paul, who wished himself accursed from Christ, or in other words, separated from Chaistian communion as a vile and worthless thing; for the sake of his brethren and kindred according to the flesh! None but souls enlarged and elevated by Divine inspirations of benevolence can make such approaches to the character of the Redeemer who died for his enemies.

But it should be observed that there are gifts and graces which appear very much like the spiritual, but are really destitute of divine life and love. Reference is had to those whose gifts are rather intellectual than spiritual, that possess the glare with the coldness of the iceberg; who are endowed, perhaps, with a wonderful volubility, pray with great fluency, speak with the tongues of men and angels, seem to possess all knowledge and all faith, and yet they are as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. Many, eminent in these traits, have proved themselves vile and

worthless. Genuine Christian charity, on the contrary, is a modest virtue; *it vaunteth not itself; is not puffed; doth not behave itself unseemly*, and yet is always intent on doing good. Like Christ, who was himself the perfect embodiment and highest expression of charity, it accomplishes its benevolent purpose, and then shrinks from the world's observation and praise.

Again, love is the great bond of Christian communion. The church is a body composed of many members, yet so united by spiritual ties, that if one member suffer, the whole body suffers with it. Now love is the cure of all those evils which may disease the members and threaten the body. It will restore health and beauty to the whole system, and preserve it in the vigor and activity of immortal life.

The vast and complicated machinery of nature is kept in motion and made to work out its stupendous results by the force of laws which act harmoniously. These laws are the constant uniform pressure of the hand of the Almighty. Now, should anything interrupt the harmony of their action—any disturbing force be introduced which should cause them to act and react upon each other—universal confusion would follow, and the whole material superstructure would be shattered and hurled into ruin. So the greatest evils that ever have, or ever can happen to the church, originate in the violation of the great law of love. We aver it as our settled conviction, that the Christian church has suffered more from this source, than from all the opposition and persecution received from the world without. The flames of passion, envy, jealousy, and recriminations within, have consumed, as it were, her life and power, while those from without have only singed her garments.

Charity commends Christianity to the unbelieving world. Nothing does it so effectually. Hence, the prayer of our Saviour for his disciples: That they all may be one: as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: *that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.* The apostacy first separated mankind from their Maker, and this prepared the way for disunion among themselves. And the farther they separated from God, the common centre, the wider—like concentric waves—have they parted one from another. The object of Christ's mission was to unite them, first to their Maker, and having thus a common centre of attraction—a common object of love and reverence—they would of necessity be united to one another. It is an axiom in mathematics, that things equal to the same thing are equal to one another. So it is an axiom in morals, that all created intelligences who love the same glorious God, will love one another. Drawn to a common centre, they are influenced by the same laws of attraction. Christ knew this, and therefore prays to his Father that they

all may be *one in us*, as the first thing absolutely essential to union among themselves. And this harmony among Christians is equally essential to the world's faith in Christianity. It wipes from her garments all unseemly spots, and presents her to the world as she truly is, the most lovely and beautiful object that ever engaged the attention of immortal minds. As a system of religion it is perfect and complete, whether you regard its spirit or its principles, its ordinances or its institutions, its hopes or its eternal realizations. But most men judge of religion by the character of its professed friends. This is natural. The tree is known by its fruit. When we contemplate the obscenity and moral debasement of the most devout worshippers of idols, we cannot avoid the conviction that their religion is a system of gross falsehoods in its principles, and of the most loathsome impurity in its practice. Investigating the philosophy of Paganism, such is found to be the fact. Christianity, on the contrary, as seen in its legitimate effects, breathes a spirit the most kind, gentle and loving, and inculcates principles the most pure, ennobling and sanctifying. Let its principles be transcribed into the lives of mankind—let all who are Christians in name be living epistles read and known of all men, and it would fill them with wonder, if not with admiration. So heavenly would it appear that it could not fail to convince the mind of its Divine origin, if it proved ineffectual to win over the heart. Its love and benevolence will prevail where nothing else can; to captivate the heart and subdue the soul. And how much more permanent and noble are such conquests than those achieved by physical force! That religion which cuts way by the sword, or depends for its progress upon power or civil policy, is from any other source than from Heaven. But that which opens for itself a passage by its own intrinsic excellence and loveliness, shows its Divine origin, and is sure to make glorious conquests over sin and error.

Hence, let the lives of Christians generally reflect the lovely spirit and the unsullied purity of our religion, and it would lend wings to the gospel and bid it fly through the world, scattering its blessings wide as the ruins of the apostacy. O, when shall all feuds and divisions come to an end? When shall the bow of peace span the Protestant Christendom, and sweetly smiling charity sit like a dove upon all hearts?

Antichrist looks with a malignant pleasure upon all the bickerings, contentions and schisms which occur in the Protestant world. He raises his bloody crest and surveys with a keen eye our fair heritage, and rattles around the very porches of our sanctuaries. We anticipate glorious times when the Man of Sin is destroyed; but this glory will not consist so much in the external rule or dominion of the church, as in the universal restoration of her primitive purity and simplicity. When Christians shall waive disputes about minor things, and unite upon the platform of fundamental truths; when they shall make real moral excellence the ground of union and mutual affection, and things unessential the objects of mutual forbearance; when such times shall come, then will the lion and the lamb lie down together, and

there shall be none to hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain. This, *this* is the long wished for millennium.

But this joyful period will not come till the professed friends of the Redeemer unitedly and earnestly engage in eradicating whatever is *anti-Christian* in themselves. The Man of Sin will not be overthrown by mere physical force, nor by hurling the thunderbolts of invective at the infallible Chair. More, by far, will be accomplished by slaying what remains of the Man of Sin within ourselves. While rancorous, uncharitable, schismatical feelings exist in the Protestant world, and the spirit of Christianity is supplanted by its forms, Anti-christ will sit undisturbed upon his throne; the great red dragon will continue to pursue the woman, and cast from his mouth floods of wrath.

The evangelical Alliance, if it has done nothing more, has brought out to the observation of the world one glorious truth that may be made of paramount practical utility, namely, that there is "an invisible but essential, a hidden but a real unity in the Church of Christ." That while in the external there have been differences, in the internal there has been unity. The regenerating, sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit is in all hearts one and the same in its essential characteristics. And hence all who are born of God exhibit the lineaments of a common paternity, love substantially the same truths, breathe the same spirit, and are destined to the same home in heaven. "We must carry the Alliance with us into all our several spheres of action, and work out the grand idea which has been presented here. We have collected round the waters of charity, and we have washed the name 'sectarian' from our brow; we have placed the name of 'Christian' there; we have abjured bigotry; we have espoused and adopted love. We will catch from the page of history what as yet has been an aphorism to decorate or garnish a speech: we will place it on our banners: it is our own motto: it seems in a spirit of prophecy to have been made on purpose for us: In fundamentals, unity; in circumstantials, liberty; in all things, charity."* Let the maintenance and the working out of such noble sentiments become general in Christendom, and soon will the anthem of the church's jubilee be shouted from the heavens' and caught up by hill and mountain, will roll its choral strains up every vale and along every shore of this lower world.

II. Let us inquire what can be done to promote Christian charity.

We must acknowledge moral worth wherever we find it. Whatever is good is from God, and He is to be acknowledged in all things, as well in the tinsel on the wing of the butterfly as in the lustre of the sun; as well in the structure of the little ant as in that of the great elephant; as well in the bloom of the modest violet under your feet as in the glory of the heavens over your heads. In like manner all *moral* excellencies are to be recognized. We must approve of what is right and good in our antagonist, as well as in our friend, whose views harmonize with our own. And we must take care that our own whim or caprice is not the measure of worth and goodness we see in others. We are not to say that this thing is right and that is wrong, simply because it is or is not conformed to our standard of sentiment or taste. The Word of God is the only infallible standard of right, and by that alone are all views of moral worth to be formed. There are different degrees of

* Rev. J. Angel James before the Evangelical Alliance, London.

moral worth in different individuals, but none are as holy as they ought to be. This fact should teach us mutual forbearance and charity; to rejoice in moral excellence in whatever degree and in whatever person it is found. And this will sweeten our tempers and remove our animosities; while it is sure to soften down the asperities and win over the respect of our antagonist, and thus tend to lessen the distance between us. There is a kind of spirit which is so different from that charity which thinketh no evil, that it seems to think nothing but evil of those who happen to differ from us. It is a sour, acrimonious state of mind, which looks at everything through a jaundiced eye, and criminates those who honestly differ from us in opinion. We seem not to understand that a jewel may be found even among rubbish; that Jesus is to be worshipped even when lying in a stable; and that the ark of God is to be owned though in the possession of the Philistines. Now, if all professing Christians had more of that charity which is not puffed up, and thinketh no evil, they would find their minds more composed and the acidity of their hearts more effectually neutralized. They would see that all truth and wisdom is not with them: that it is possible to be right and owned of Christ though differing from them: that they hold many things in common with those from whom ecclesiastical lines or a bad spirit separates them; and this would make them modest, forbearing, and courteous.

We should think much upon the love of God. "We love him because he first loved us;" and he that realizes how God has loved him will find in this a constant and urgent reason why he should love his brother. Says John: "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." The motive here presented urges us to the exercise of charity the most catholic and comprehensive; charity that *endureth all things*, and *never faileth;* that while it covers a multitude of sins and is slow to impute iniquity, will nevertheless put forth untiring energies to save men from transgression and its dreadful consequences. The love of seraphs burns not like a lamp in a sepulchre, but like the stars of heaven it sheds its beams upon other objects. The love of God is in its very nature diffusive. It knows no bounds, and will not be confined within prescribed limits. It dispels the clouds, and stills the tempests, and sweetens the whole atmosphere of the soul. It enlarges the mind, and softens the affections, and calms the passions, and smooths the ruggedness of our natures. It cuts up pride and selfishness root and branch, and inspires us with the most kind and generous feelings. Who can contemplate Jehovah sending rain upon the evil and upon the good; and who can trace the Saviour from the manger to the cross, whose every act was tenderness and love, and not feel his bosom swell with the most enlarged benevolence? Dwell much upon the astonishing love of God if you would have a full measure of charity.

As another means of cultivating this lovely virtue, we must *endeavor to obtain clear views of the great design of the Christian religion.* That it is not to furnish subjects merely for speculation, to awaken the curiosity, and heat the imagination; but to array before the mind powerful motives to a holy life, to aid us in controlling our passions, subduing our appetites and directing our wills; and in bringing all our powers into subserviency to the glory of God—to the best good of society, and the salvation of souls. And if Christians would acknowledge this to be their appropriate work, and conscientiously apply themselves to it, they would find enough about which to employ their thoughts, and neither time nor occasion to be prying into the infirmities of their neighbors. They would see how unwise it is to be jealous and suspicious of others' wrongs, when so much remains to be corrected in themselves. There is a sort of moral derangement in such conduct, just as if a man should quarrel with his neighbor about a penny when his house is on fire and his family ready to perish in the flames. The Christian has no moral difficulties to contend with that are of so serious a character as those he finds in his own breast. These require his attention, diligence, and strength to subdue. And he will discover so much in himself to censure, and so little to approve, that he will hasten to forgive the trespass of a brother, and extend to him the charity which he himself so much needs.

Furthermore, *we should avoid all passionate and angry disputes* on the subject of religion. Charity and truth both suffer in such conflicts. When passion takes the field reason and judgment retire. When the waters are agitated and fouled there is no seeing to the bottom. It is the calm investigator that arrives at the truth and convinces his opponent, while the hot disputant only creates clouds which shut out the light, at the sacrifice of love. If truth rather than triumph be our object, we shall let reason assert her rights and charity maintain her dominion over the soul. We may differ from a brother in our religious opinion, but when we are inclined to assail him vehemently, let us remember the fable of the sun and the wind contending for the traveler's cloak. The wind blew with violence, and the more it blustered the closer did he draw his cloak about him, at length the sun beams out with calm and penetrating rays and gently warmed him into a disposition to take off his cloak himself. There is nothing so convincing and subduing as love: nothing has such power to disarm and paralyze the errorist. Approach him in this temper, and you are sure to gain his respect and esteem, if you fail to dislodge his errors and win him over to the truth. As passion and prejudice bear sway he is sure to adhere closer to his errors, and become less susceptible of benefit.

It is true that we are commanded to "contend earnestly for

the faith that was once delivered to the saints." But the faith here meant, does not consist in points of doubtful import, but in the fundamental doctrine that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, accompanied with a holy life; the persons against whom the primitive saints were to contend were the ungodly that denied the only Lord God and Our Lord Jesus Christ. For essential and fundamental points like this, we may, and ought to contend earnestly, yet in love: but contention about lesser and unessential points is called by the apostle *perverse disputing*, and is more the result of pride and ignorance than of enlightened rational zeal.

Beware also of *a heated sectarian zeal*. In the furnace which is kindled by zeal for a religious party, charity is often dreadfully scorched, if not entirely consumed. If our adherence to a particular church or denomination arises from an honest and sincere belief that it is equally if not more Christian in its doctrines, spirit, usages and practice than other branches of Zion, than we are consistent, and our motives may not be questioned. Such an adherence is perfectly consistent with that enlarged liberality and charity towards others who may differ from us in religious opinions and sympathies, that *never faileth* and is always *kind*. But our attachment to a church or denomination merely from love to a party, or from a belief that it may better promote some private end, is sheer selfishness. And yet in connection with this latter spirit we generally find the most intemperate sectarian zeal. Persons of no higher attachments than these are generally the most opinionated and censorious, and often look upon Christians in other church relations with denominational pride and contempt, and affect to thank God that they are not like these publicans. They charm themselves with the fond imaginings of their own light, and fancy all others to be in darkness. They heap to themselves teachers, and in their man-worship exclaim, I am for *Paul*, or I am for *Apollos*, or I am for *Cephas*; this man is a *powerful reasoner*, or that man is *eloquent*, or such a one is *liberal*; while they in turn assure their people that they are God's chosen and favored church!

Such views and feelings are unfriendly to charity, engender animosities and persecutions, and cherish the worst passions of the human heart. We have a striking illustration in the description which Jude has given us of the sectaries in his time. He distinguishes them by various unmistakable marks. By their vain conceits: hence they were *dreamers*. By their insolent opposition to government: hence they *despised dominion*, and *spoke evil of dignities*. By their ignorance and malice: hence they *spoke evil things they knew not*. By their unkindness and cruelty to their brethren: hence their relapse into *the way of Cain*. By their murmurings against their rulers: hence they perished in the *gainsaying of Core*. By their false pre-

tensions to virtue: hence they were *clouds without water*. By their inconsistency: hence they were *carried about by winds*. By their violent and furious temper: hence they were *raging waves of the sea*. By the irregularity and danger of their course: hence they were *wandering stars*. By their discontent: hence they were *murmurers* and *complainers*. By their stubbornness: hence they *walked after their own lusts*. By their self-conceit and pride of party: hence their *mouth spoke great swelling words*. By their fond admiration of their own people: hence they *had men's persons in admiration*. By their sectarian pride and scorn: hence they were called *mockers*. By the schismatical spirit: hence *they were those who separated themselves*. By their real sensuality: hence they were justly called *sensual, having not the Spirit*.

Such is Jude's striking portraiture of a class of religionists in his day, who in their pride and self righteousness withdrew from the communion of the Christian brotherhood under pretense of greater holiness. And such has ever been and will ever be, the sad results of man-worship, or sectarian zeal in the absence of Christian charity.

Finally, *prayer* is an eminent means of promoting the charity that never faileth. For, the spirit of prayer and of unkindness have no affinity. The Christian cannot go from his closet where he has had melting views of his own unworthiness; where he has heard the groans and seen the agonies and the blood of his Redeemer; and hate and injure his brother. Let the love of God and man warm his heart in prayer, and it will burn up all censoriousness and unkindness; and his very countenance will radiate the light, love, and benevolence of his inner man. Men have come down from the mount of prayer, and put in motion some of the grandest schemes of Christian benevolence that are now blessing the world. Had their been aught of unkindness and misanthropy in their hearts they could not have given birth to such plans nor put them in execution. If then, my brethren, you ever become selfish, and sour, and worldly in your feelings, go upon the mount and remain there till you have prayed them all away—pray till you are melted into repentance and love, till all your passions and affections are sweetened and chastened by Divine Grace, and you can embrace in your arms of piety and benevolence the whole human family—all who are the offspring of a common Parent—the subjects of a like apostacy and redemption—the brethren of the same adoption—heirs of one common glory.

The field is the world. Then let your hearts be enlarged until you can take in the world; until you can feel that every man has an immortal soul, whose redemption is unspeakably precious; that every man is your brother, and your neighbor, and *may become* through grace a bright seraph in heaven. Go to *Gethsemane* and listen to its agonizing prayers. Ascend Cal-

vary and hear the groans and heart-rending cries of the crucified One. Comprehend, if you can, the deep, unfathomable love of the "Man of sorrows," as he prays for his murderers. Go often and linger long upon the mount of prayer, until you bathe your souls in the pure streams of Divine grace, and drink deeper than ever at the fountain of Divine love. *Charity never faileth:* your bodies will be consigned to the grave; your earthly hopes and affections quenched in the darkness of death: but love to God never dies—it is life everlasting; and having accomplished its blessed mission in this world of sin and sorrow, it will put on immortality, and shine and rejoice forevermore in the kingdom of heaven.

A SHORT SERMON.—BY THE EDITOR.

THE JOY OF ANGELS.

"There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.—LUKE 15 : 10.

THE joy of angels is over the repentance and salvation of sinners. Such a view have they of the misery, guilt and doom of transgression, and of the amazing worth and preciousness of eternal redemption by Jesus Christ, that the repentance of but one sinner renders all heaven joyful, and is celebrated by angels as an event of infinite interest and value. Said the Lord of angels : "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance." The recovery of a lost soul to God; the salvation of a sinner from the law-incurred penalty, from sin itself, and from the doom of an endless hell; his salvation by means of that Cross which so honors God and sustains His law while it redeems and reconciles, *is* a stupendous achievement. Where, in the universe, can anything be found to equal it, in interest, importance, blessedness, true sublimity? The most thrilling events of a merely temporal, social or political character; the creation or destruction of material worlds and systems; the rise and fall of kingdoms; the setting up of new and the casting down of old dynasties : and all the pomp and honor and power and wealth of the world—lost or gained—all these, in the sight of Heaven, are of less importance than the rescuing of but one priceless, lost soul from eternal ruin.

It is for the SALVATION of men that the thoughts of Heaven are mainly concerned. The sympathies, desires, hopes and anxieties of angels respect man as a sinner—a child of guilt and yet of hope —lost and yet within reach of salvation—under the power of death and yet immortal—on trial for life eternal—running a race for heaven or for hell! What men call the great events of time are trifles in their sight : what men call mean, small, of no moment, they count grand, vast, chief, everything. As they wing their flight over this once fair but now blighted world, and survey its varied scenes—the din of its business, the glitter of its wealth, the pride of its greatness, the temples of its learning, the tread of its armies, and the war of its navies, the tumult of the nations, and the crash of falling kingdoms—these are not the events which arrest their attention and excite their

interest; but they do mark the falling tear of the penitent, and listen to the sigh of the contrite; they pause over the dwelling of prayer, and mingle in the circle of devotion; they watch the sinner in all his goings, and register the number of the saved, and bear to heaven the joyful news when a soul is converted.

The angels take the liveliest interest in matters pertaining to man's salvation; they are anxious spectators of the race which he is running; the guardian and ministering spirits of the heirs of salvation; and rejoice over every "sinner that repenteth" with a universal and a great rejoicing. What a rebuke is this to the dullness and apathy and neglect of too many Christians!

The angels in heaven and Christians on earth have one and the same general interest, and grand theme, to enlist and call forth their love and service. And hence they should have a fellow-feeling. The desire, the anxiety, the joy of angels ought to be the desire, the anxiety, the joy of every good man. Christians ought to look upon sinners with the pity of angels, yearn over them with the tenderness and solicitude of angels, and joy over their salvation with the joy of angels. Redemption should so wake our sensibilities, and sway such a power over our minds and hearts that the sight of a fellow-sinner plucked from endless ruin and recovered to God and life, should give us the highest joy—thrill our being as nothing else can do. Earthly joy, earthly gain, earthly triumphs, what are they all worth in the scale with an immortal soul, made in the image of God—made for happiness, glory and endless life—converted from the error of his ways and made an heir of glory? When all beneath the sun has been reduced to ashes, that soul will rise to God, resplendent in moral worth and beauty, and shine forever in glory, as a star of the Redeemer's crown. The salvation of the meanest sinner that ever lived on earth, is worth all the treasures of tears and toil and blood, that the Christian church has ever poured out at the feet of Jesus.

Is this the feeling of Christians? Is concern for the sinner made the great concern of their hearts? Do their souls melt and rejoice over a repentant sinner with a celestial feeling? Have we, as Christians, adequate views of the worth of the soul; of the extent of the ruin which sin has brought upon it; and of the need and preciousness of its redemption? Is *salvation* the theme of themes with us? Does it set the heart on fire—inspire the tongue, nerve the soul, and command life's best and noblest service? Alas! must we not confess to an apathy here that is the grief and sorrow of angels? We do not fully enter into the spirit of the thrilling scenes which are transpiring in this apostate and gospel world. We do not half feel for sinners who are perishing eternally on every hand—in our streets, in our sanctuaries, in our own dwellings. We do

not wait and watch for the repentance of sinners, and pour out the full tide of the heart's gratitude and joy when any are found returning to give glory to God. We do not put our hearts in living contact with the cross of Christ, and fully fellowship its sympathy and travail and agony and joy and glory in the blessed work of saving sinners. Oh, that we had the spirit of Christ—the spirit of angels! Then would one great thought—the rescuing of souls from sin and death—engross our minds, enlist every faculty and energy, and constrain a willing, undivided, untiring service for God and salvation.

The soul of man is of infinite value, or the angels of God would not take such an interest in its welfare. Its guilty and ruined state while perishing in sin is inexpressibly awful, or its recovery to God and life would not thus thrill the heavenly world with joy. Oh, how would angels plead and toil and strive to save men if they were but permitted such an access to, and influence over them, as Christians possess! And can Christians be stupid or neglectful, when angels are thus awake and would do so much to pull men out of the fire of perdition? Can human or angelic efforts be better expended than in behalf of man's salvation? What are the grand achievements of art, science or arms—what the noblest enterprises of commerce or ambition, compared to the bringing of a single sinner to Christ? "Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." Christian reader, take home this thought to your heart. Ponder it well. No other end is worth living for. Live for this. Let those sublime motives which ruled the mission and life of Jesus Christ, rule your heart and life.

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SERMON DVI.

By REV. ALBERT BARNES,

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THE PESTILENCE.*

"Before him went the pestilence."—HABAKKUK iii. 5.

No one can fail to be struck with the sublimity of this passage of Scripture. God is represented as passing from one land to another, accompanied with the symbols of His glory. Among those symbols was the Pestilence, preceding His coming, either as an emblem of His awful majesty, or of the ease with which he prostrates the tribes of men; or as expressive of justice and judgment. Apart from the mere *poetry* of the representation, however, the main truth which seems to be taught is, the connection between the Pestilence when it visits the earth, and God; or, the pestilence as accompanying the divine Being in his movements among the nations, The thought is, that the Pestilence is not the work of chance, of fate, or of mere natural laws, but is somehow connected with the Divine administration of human affairs, and should be recognized as such: or, in other words, that wherever the pestilence is, there is God directing it for distinct and important purposes.

There are great inquiries which the Pestilence, in any form, is fitted to excite among men, and each one will pursue these inquiries with reference to his own proper department:—the physiologist, the moralist, the theologian. In regard almost to no visitations of Divine Providence to the world, are there so many questions that are still involved in difficulty and uncertainty, as in reference to the various forms of the pestilence. It may be added, also, that whenever it appears in the world, and in whatever form

* Preached in the First Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, on the day appointed to be observed as a National Fast, August 3, 1849.

it may manifest itself, it is a proper occasion for men to inquire why God comes among them in this form of visitation, and what lessons he is intending to convey.

The term *pestilence* is a very general term. It is, essentially, some form of wasting sickness that cuts men suddenly down, and that stands apart, in some respects, from the ordinary and regular diseases with which our race is visited. Whether infectious or not, or contagious or not—if *any* diseases are contagious—its general characteristics seem to be, that numbers are simultaneously affected; that it is usually rapid in its work; that it defies the ordinary precautions for warding off disease; that it sets at naught the skill of medicine as applied in the usual methods of restoration of health; and that if it is governed by regular laws and controlled by second causes—as there is no reason to doubt that it is—they are laws of its own, and are difficult of detection and classification. It is an extraordinary, not miraculous, visitation of divine Providence to mankind.

The inquiries which are appropriate to this occasion are, what place does it occupy under the Divine administration, or as connected with the moral government of God? What bearing has it on us as rational and accountable agents? What purposes does God design to accomplish by it? What relation, if any, has it to the sins of individuals, or the sins of a nation? Why, in bringing it upon men, does God depart from his ordinary rules in regard to disease, and his common methods in closing human life? These are the only inquiries which pertain to this place and to this occasion. There are others of great moment which pertain to the Medical Schools; or the Sanitary Boards; and to the other conservators of public health. I have not the ability to go into them; I shall touch on them no farther than is appropriate to my department—to show to such men that *their* inquiries should not exclude the higher inquiry, in which as men and as sinners, we all have a common interest.

I propose to direct your thoughts to the one point only which has already been adverted to:—the place which the Pestilence occupies under the Divine administration, or as connected with the moral government of God. In doing this, I shall notice what seem to me to be some prevalent erroneous opinions in regard to it, and shall then endeavor to show you what is the true doctrine on the subject.

I. My first object is to examine some prevalent opinions in regard to the matter which seem to me to be erroneous. The views which I propose to notice under this head may be reduced to two:—those which do not recognize God at all in the Pestilence, and those which are the result of reasoning loosely and inconclusively in regard to His design.

1. It is undeniable that there is a very large class of persons that do not, practically, recognize the hand of God in such visitations at all, but who pursue their inquiries in such a way, as practically to exclude all recognition of the Great Ruler of the universe. There are few, indeed, that would take this ground openly and theoretically; and it may be hoped that the expression in the proclamation which has so appropriately called us together this day, recognizing the Divine hand in this visitation, may be regarded not only as giving utterance to the sentiment entertained by the highest authority in this Christian nation, but as an exponent of the belief entertained by the mass of the nation at large.* But there *is* a large class, it is to be feared, among whom there is no proper recognition of God; a class so intent on searching out the secondary causes, that the acknowledgment of the Divine hand does not occur. This remark, indeed, need not be confined to inquiries respecting the pestilence, and it is peculiarly proper to make it here only because there is so much in the pestilence that is adapted to rebuke it. It is, indeed, remarkable, that inquiries *can* be pursued in our world on so many subjects with no practical and proper recognition of God. One would say, if he were to theorize on the matter, that it would be quite an impracticable thing to pursue the study of botany, or anatomy, or astronomy, or chemistry, without finding constant traces of wisdom, and benevolence, and power, that could be best explained on the supposition that there is a God, and that could be satisfactorily explained on no other supposition. Yet, how little is this theoretical view sustained by fact. What a large portion is there of those engaged in these pursuits who fail, in any practical and proper manner, to recognize in them the Divine agency. For this there are two causes: the one is, that having found, as they suppose, the law which explains the phenomenon or the cause which lies immediately back of it, they are satisfied with that, and regard their work as done; the other is that which is stated by

* "At a season when the providence of God has manifested itself in the visitation of a fearful Pestilence, which is spreading its ravages throughout the land, it is fitting that a people whose reliance has ever been on His protection, should humble themselves before his throne; and, while acknowledging past transgressions, ask a continuance of divine mercy.

"It is therefore earnestly recommended, that the first Friday in August be observed throughout the United States as a day of *Fasting, Humiliation, and Prayer*. All business will be suspended in the various branches of the public service on that day; and it is recommended to persons of all religious denominations to abstain, as far as practicable, from secular occupations, and to assemble in their respective places of public worship, to acknowledge the infinite goodness which has watched over our existence as a nation, and so long crowned us with manifold blessings; and to implore the Almighty, in his own good time, to stay the destroying hand which is now lifted up against us.

"Z. TAYLOR.

"WASHINGTON, July 3, 1849.

the Apostle Paul as operating on a large portion of the minds of ancient philosophers; "even as they did not *like* to retain God in their knowledge." The reference of this to the pestilence, however, is the only point before us.

Of the *fact* adverted to in reference to this, I fear that no one can have any doubt. There are multitudes of men who fail altogether in recognizing the Divine hand in this visitation. They are absorbed in inquiries as to atmospheric influences; as to electricity: as to malaria; as to the natural causes in cities which may effect the public health; as to the proper quarantine and sanitary regulations. In themselves, all these inquiries are well; but what I would wish to suggest to this class of men is, that the pestilence *seems* as if it were a part of God's design in sending it, to rebuke the atheistic spirit with which you ordinarily pursue your investigations into the works of nature. In the regular laws of health or of sickness in the human frame, and in the beautiful laws of chemistry and of botany, you fail to see any traces of Divine wisdom and goodness, and even in the laws of astronomy, you fail to see the great and glorious Creator and Upholder of all. Those laws are so regular and so beautiful, and so satisfactory in themselves; there seems to you to be so little of Divine agency in them, and the whole thing works so much like a beautiful machine; there is to your mind so little evidence of intervention, or of any foreign influence, that your thoughts are never raised from the formation of the crystal up to the God who *may* make each particle seek its appropriate attachment; from the flower up to Him who has so beautifully pencilled it; from satellites and suns up to the One mind that directs them all. Yet here, in the pestilence, is a visitation that is eminently adapted to rebuke that spirit. It *seems* to come direct from God. Its laws are to you unknown. You yourself can trace it to nothing short of his throne. You are not able to rest in secondary causes; not even to tell what those secondary causes are. About the pestilence there is no atheism. If you find atheism anywhere else, for the same reason that you find it there, there is none here. If your mind rests in the regularity of the laws of nature elsewhere, it cannot *as yet* here; for here is a new aspect of the Divine administration that is opened upon you. If you are a practical atheist here, it is for reasons which have not operated to make you an atheist on any other subject.—and you are here left to resist the *new* demonstrations that there is a God, and to find *new* reasons for being an atheist. There are features above the pestilence which *look* as if they were under the control of an intelligent Ruler of the universe—of One who does according to his will in the army of heaven, and the inhabitants of the earth;—of One, in reference to whose dealings the impressive thought of the king of Babylon is so strikingly applicable:—"Who can stay his hand, or say unto

him, What doest thou?" To almost nothing can the apothegm of Bacon be more properly applied than to this very case:—"A little philosophy inclineth a man to atheism; but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion;—for while the mind of man looketh upon second causes scattered, it may sometimes rest in them, and go no further; but when it beholdeth the chain of them confederate and linked together, it must needs fly to Providence and Deity."

2. I notice a second view which appears to me to be equally, erroneous. It is that where there *is* a recognition of the hand of God, but it seems to me on no principles demanded in the Bible, and authorized by no rational views of the Divine administration. This view embraces two aspects: that which speaks of the pestilence as if it were a miracle—and that which regards it as a specific judgment for particular sins. *In regard to the former;* —while there is abundant recognition of God, and while there is an intention to honor Him, there can be no doubt that there is among religious people, a view of all such subjects that regards these visitations, as being as much beyond all secondary laws, as any of the miracles were which the Saviour wrought, or as the judgments with which God afflicted Egypt in its resistance to His commands, or as the plagues that He brought upon his people when under the theocracy. It is much, even for good men, to learn that God can rule the world in its ordinary administrations, without miraculous interference; and it is not a departure from all proper recognition of the Divine hand, to suppose that the pestilence has its place under His government, substantially as other events have, and that it is administered by similar laws.—In *regard to the latter opinion*—that the pestilence is to be regarded as a special judgment for particular national sins,—it is worthy of careful inquiry, whether this is the correct view which is to be taken of the relation of these extraordinary visitations. I know that it is a very common view. I doubt not that this will be the view which will be taken by many in the public discourses this day. It has been so at all times, and there is a strong tendency among certain classes of men, and perhaps particularly among ministers of the gospel, to take this view of the design of Divine judgments. The prevalence of the plague of pestilence, of famine, of war, of any great public calamity, is set down as a proof of the Divine anger, and regarded as a demonstration of God's displeasure against some abounding form of iniquity, and as a call for repentance on account of *that* special form of public transgression. It is often judged to be an easy matter to determine what *are* the sins for which a people are thus visited; and the Divine displeasure against that form of national transgression is supposed to be marked by the severity of the infliction. In estimating the sin for which God thus visits a people, each one will

be likely to select that which in his own view is most aggravated and prominent, though there be no apparant connection between *that* sin and the peculiar form of the visitation. With one, it will be the national sin of intemperance—with another, that of oppression—with another, that of infidelity—with another, that of ingratitude—with another, that of Sabbath desecration—with another, that of waging war—with another, that of licentiousness—with another the idea is, that in all these respects we are becoming worse, and that the visitation of the pestilence is a Divine judgment for all combined. Accordingly, a fast day, appointed like this, is usually an occasion on which the ministers of religion dwell—and not improperly, except in the point of view now before us—on the prevalence of national sins. Two things would strike the hearers of many discourses on such occasions: One, that we are a nation given up to wickedness—a nation where every form of evil abounds, and where no good influences prevail—a nation so sunk in depravity that a stranger, if he had no other source of information, would infer that we are the most ungrateful and corrupt people on the earth; and the other would be, that the nation is in all respects growing worse, and that there was no way of recovering it but by this extraordinary visitation, levelled directly against prevailing sins. Accordingly it is painful to read the "fast sermons" preached in other days, in our own country; and painful that they should be preserved as serving in any way to mark the real character of the times.

Now, there can be no doubt that there are sins enough in the nation, over which we should mourn, nor that those sins are of an aggravated character, and that they are such as to deserve the severity of the Divine displeasure. There can be no doubt that it is proper for us, and for all this people, this day, to call them to remembrance, and on account of them to humble ourselves before God, nor that our nation has much to apprehend from the prevalence of those sins, because they are a violation of the Divine law,—and because, in their own nature, and being a violation of the Divine law, they are "a reproach to any people," and tend to national disaster. Nor do I mean to intimate that this visitation of Divine Providence should not be, in any respect, contemplated in connection with the existence of national sins, or that it is in no sense to be regarded as a rebuke for prevalent iniquity. But that of which I am expressing a doubt is, whether it is to be regarded as *a direct judgment* for these, or any other national sins; and whether, because we are thus visited, we are to infer that we are "sinners above all that dwell upon the earth," or are, in fact, becoming more corrupt, abandoned, and ungrateful. In other words, I doubt whether it can be demonstrated, and whether it ought to be so represented, that God means that this judgment should be a rebuke for any particular form of prevalent sin; or

as a proof that we are a singnally depraved people: or as a demonstration that we are growing worse; or as an argument that religion and virtue are not, on the whole, advancing in the land.

It would consume too much of the time to state the reasons why this view is entertained, and I will not draw them out in detail. They are summarily these:—That the Saviour seems to have settled the principle in what he says about the eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell, and the Galileans whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices (Luke xiii: 1-5); that there *is* no prevailing form of sin for which this judgment seems to be particularly intended—that is, that it is not so *confined* to any particular form of iniquity, is not so directly and clearly in the line of our national offences, as to convey any distinct lesson on any one of these specific subjects; that, as already remarked, it cannot be regarded as of the nature of a miracle, like the plagues of Egypt, and must therefore, be designed to teach lessons more general in their character; and that it cannot be interpreted as levelled against the particular sins of this nation, for it has a wider sweep; it began on the other side of the globe, it has travelled among all the nations; it has gone where the peculiar sins which exist here do not prevail, and it has, therefore, some greater and broader lesson to teach mankind at large, and as one family, about God.

II. But, in the second place, what are we to regard as the true doctrine on the subject, and as the true principles of judging in the case? This inquiry will bring up the consideration of the relation of the Divine judgments to the sins of men. I say "to the sins of men;" for I do not deem it necessary to attempt to prove that there *is* such a relation, and that the different forms of evil with which our race is afflicted are to be regarded as connected with the fact that it is a sinful race, and are, at once a proof of that fact, and a means of estimating the manner in which God regards transgression.

There are, then, two great principles on the subject which I desire to set before you, and which, if correct, exhaust the subject. One is plain; the other, embracing the matter before us, is more difficult.

(1.) The *plain* principle is this:—that there is a class of sins that bring their own punishment, sooner or later, along with them; sins in reference to which the judgment is in the line of the offence, so that there can be no mistaking the cause and the effect. These embrace a very large portion of the infractions of the Divine laws, civil, social, domestic, and individual; and these are the standing proofs that there is a Divine moral government, and are an indication of its nature, and a vindication of the revealed doctrine respecting the penalties of law. The

instances that illustrate this are too numerous, and the principle is too plain, to make it proper to dwell on the point now. The most obvious instance, perhaps, to illustrate this, is intemperance in the use of intoxicating drinks. In referring to this, I mean that there is a *class* of results as the consequence of this habit that flow directly from it; that are found nowhere else; that, as a great law, always follow from it sooner or later; and that, therefore, may be interpreted as an expression of the Divine view of that habit, and as a proof that some clear law of nature, armed with an appropriate penalty, has been violated. For these effects are not such as follow a mode of life which God approves. They are effects which are found appended to no other course of conduct. They are results so uniform as to show that there is an infraction of law, and so fearful and destructive as to demonstrate that the law was one which He who made our frame meant particularly to guard. The babbling, the poverty, the disgrace, the ruin of the intellect, the corruption of morals, the debasement of manners, the blunting of the moral sense, the train of diseases, the liability to commit crime, the sense of personal misery, and the peculiar form of mania to which the inebriate is subject, and which so frequently closes life—these and kindred things are of the nature of *penalty*, and come upon men as an undoubted judgment for what God regards as wrong-doing—and what in all His dealings with men, in spite of all their devices, He will *continue* to regard as wrong-doing. Here we never make a mistake in connecting the judgment with crime; nor is any other part of the Divine administration better understood than this.

There are multitudes of things in the world which, if not in all respects equally plain, are no less illustrative of the principle:—things so numerous and so certain as to enable men to understand that there is a moral government over the world; to determine with a good degree of accuracy what its principles are; and to furnish constant confirmations, by the course of Providential dealings, of the laws which have been disclosed in the volume of revealed truth. Thus, licentiousness has its own most awful and unmistakable penalty; war has its penalty; slavery has its penalty; avarice has its penalty; pride has its penalty; dishonesty, indolence, fraud, falsehood, all have their penalties. That is, there is a class of evils which spring out of each and every one of such things which spring from nothing else, and which would *not* be suffered if some law of God had not been violated, and its penalty incurred. It is not necessary to specify these things farther.

(2.) I turn, then, to the consideration of the second principle referred to. This relates more particularly to the case before us, and concerns a large part of the Divine dealings in this world. The case is, that where the judgment—if it be a judgment—or the

calamity, if it is to be regarded as a mere calamity (and whether it is or not, is the very point before us), cannot be shown to spring directly out of human conduct, and to be the regular result of a specific violation of law. This class would embrace most of those things which are commonly spoken of as "judgments," and would comprehend the plague in its irregular but fearful visitations; the pestilence, in the various forms in which it appears; famine—whether more limited or more general; tornadoes, tempests, earthquakes, conflagrations, inundations, perhaps the irruption of barbarians, and the ravages of an invading army. Under this head, also, might be brought revulsions in the commercial world; a derangement of the monetary affairs of nations; the downfall of governments, and the revolutions of states and empires. The question before us is, How are these to be interpreted as connected with the Divine administration? By what principle are we to judge of them, and how are we to feel in regard to them, when we are visited by them? I design, in what I have yet to say on this point, to lay down a few principles which truth seems to me to warrant, of so general a nature as to be applicable to all of them; but to derive the illustrations solely from that fearful visitation with which our land has been afflicted, and which is the occasion of our assembling to-day.

(*a*) The first principle, then, which I state is, that they are all under the control and the direction of God. I make this remark in opposition to a view which was adverted to in the former part of the discourse; but I do not deem it necessary to attempt to prove its truth at length. If *anything* is under the control of God, it will be admitted that tempests, and storms, and earthquakes, and conflagrations are; that the plague, pestilence, and famine, are his ministers. Certainly, in the apprehension of the mass of mankind, God is more *likely* to be recognized in these things than he is in the gentle sun-beam, the dew, the running fountain, the daily care that ministers to our wants: and among the mass of men, and especially in civil governments, the tendency is to recognize Him *only* in these tremendous displays of His power, and thus to regard His operations as lying somewhat in the regions of miracle. And certainly if we are to admit that God is in the world at all, it is proper to admit that He *is* in the midst of these great doings, so much adapted to impress the minds of men, and to produce changes on the earth. But I shall dismiss all that I have to say on this particular, by a reference to a few passages of scripture pertaining to the very subject before us—the pestilence. "*I* will send the pestilence among you," Lev. xxvi. 25 "*I* will smite them with the pestilence," Num. xiv. 12. "The Lord shall make pestilence cleave to thee," Deut. xxviii. 31. "He gave their Life over to the pestilence," Ps. lxxviii. 50. "I will consume them by pestilence," Jer. xiv. 12. I will send

to her pestilence, and blood into her streets," Ezek. xxviii. 23. "I have sent among you the pestilence," Amos iv. 10. And the the text, "Before him went the pestilence." The *design* of quoting these passages is merely to show that the pestilence is uniformly spoken of as under the control of God, and as one of the instruments with which He accomplishes His purposes among men.

(*b.*) Another thing, then, which may be laid down in regard to it is, that it is to be presumed that God *has* some clear and definite designs which it is proper for men to regard, in such visitations. It cannot be that this is the mere play of his power; it cannot be that it is in wantonness or without purpose or end; it cannot be that he so departs from the ordinary and well-understood laws of His working without intending to convey some lesson that may be of use to mankind, or without some adaptation to His great and ultimate plans; it cannot be that He suddenly and in a fearful manner, cuts down multitudes of men of all classes, and with new and unusual forms of suffering, without intending to impress the minds of the living with some appropriate view of Himself. If these things are the mere operation of unconscious laws, they are one thing; if the work of chance, or of fate, they are another; if they are the work of an intelligent, and just and benificient Father, they are another. Let those who believe in the former account of them, explain them as they may, and derive such consolations and instructions—as they can from an explanation which excludes alike intelligence, design, benevolence, justice, and wisdom; but let us who have higher views of the universe, sit down reverently and ask what the Universal Father would have us learn from these wonderful dealings. And this brings us, then,

(*c.*) Directly to the inquiry to which all the remarks which I have made have been converging. That inquiry is What *are* the lessons taught a people by such a fearful visitation as that which has come upon our land, and upon the world? Let us look at this as if it were, as it is in some respects, a new visitation of the nations—a new going forth of God upon the earth, and see if we can discern the reasons of our Maker's doings and ways. I will state, in their order, some of those lessons which this visitation seems to me adapted to convey, and which should be before our minds in the services of this occasion.

(1.) A visitation of this kind is adapted forcibly to convey the truth that God *rules* in the nations of the earth. In a very distinct form, indeed, this truth is conveyed by *all* the interpositions of Divine Providence, and all the events that occur, if men would so regard it; but there is a peculiarity in the teaching conveyed by the events which we are considering that is adapted in a most impressive manner to convey this lesson to the mind This remark will apply to *all* those interpositions which are a de-

parture from the ordinary and regular laws by which He governs the world :—to the pestilence and the plague; to famines, conflagrations, tornadoes, earthquakes, and wars. In the ordinary course of events, as already intimated, we are prone to forget God. We fail to see Him in the sun-beam, the stars, the dews, the springing grass, the healthful action of our own frames, the opening leaf, the regular tides of the ocean. We learn to feel that we can explain these things without God. We become confident in our own wisdom, and rely on our own sagacity, and pride ourselves on our skill. God comes, therefore, with the pestilence; with storms and tempests; with commercial embarrassments; with famine and war, and disturbs the self-confident tranquility of our souls, and shows us how short-sighted is our wisdom, and how vain is our philosophy. He shows us that the lives of men are at His disposal; that all nations are under His control; that cities, towns and people are continued by His sufferance; and that when *He* gives command, all that *we* deemed secure and firm is swept away in a moment. There is no skill that can anticipate Him; there is no invention that can ward off His approach; there is no power that can resist Him. This visitation that has come upon our land, and upon the world, has shown this, and is still showing it in a most impressive manner :—for where is the nation that is secure; where is the frame so stalwart and hardy that it may not soon be cut down; where is the talent, the eloquence, the piety, or the pratriotism that constitutes immunity from the attack of the destroyer?

(2.) Such a visitation of God to our world is fitted to show that He has *hidden* resources for effecting His purposes, yet unknown to us; that there are means of accomplishing His ends which are not yet developed. We are very apt to feel that, in regard at least to *originality*, the Divine resources are exhausted; and that all we have to do in order to "find out God" is to study the methods in which He *has been* accustomed to go forth among the children of men; or, in other words, that all that there is in the Divine plans is now before us, and that there is to be nothing new. Even earthquakes, and famines, and tornadoes, we are endeavouring to reduce to the same laws, and are seeking, in our wisdom, to feel that God is limited in his operations, and that soon we can comprehend the mode and the reason of all His doings. So men endeavor to master the laws of disease, and vainly suppose they can classify, and arrange, and perhaps counteract all the maladies to which the human system is liable. Yet here is a *new* form of disease; a new visitation of God to our world. It is but recently that it has become known. There are those now living who were living when it was first heard of on the earth. It was reported as a strange disease; suddenly cutting down one wing of an army while the other wing was secure; descending

on camps and villages apparently without any law, and sweeping off families and villages at once. But it was in a far distant land. It was supposed to be local in its character. It was regarded as connected with the peculiarities of equatorial climates. It was believed to have some singular affinity for the Asiatic temperament, and other nations were supposed to be secure. The strange visitant having domesticated itself on the other side of the globe; having retained its local character so as to lull the nations to repose; having identified itself apparently with the diseases of a particular part of the world, suddenly left its home, and began its mysterious march to the West. It followed no beaten pathway; it observed no known laws. It paid no respect to climate, and seemed to have no predilection as to the course of its march. It invaded alike hills and valleys; descended on the city and the hamlet; was at home in hot regions and in cold; pursued no regular line of march, except that it kept on its fearful journey to the *West;* was undismayed by walled towns, by deserts, and by oceans; now resting in some spot fearfully visited, and now slipping from place to place; now following the course of rivers, and now leaping from mountain to mountain. We heard of it from afar, and trembled; it came upon us, and was all, in the mystery and fearfulness of its visitations, that we had dreaded. No man understood it; no one could explain it. No sage in medicine, accustomed to explain everything, could tell what this was; no one can tell now. Whether in the blood, or the atmosphere, or in some derangement of the electric fluid—who can tell? Who knows the laws of its coming? Who knows how to meet it? Who can make himself secure from its assaults? The short and most philosophical account of the whole matter is, that it is a new visitation of God among the nations; the lesson which we are to read in it is, that God has resources for accomplishing His ends which are not yet exhausted, and that in studying His ordinary dealings we have not yet "found out the Almighty to perfection." We see our Maker here going forth with a new form of manifestation. How much more He may have in reserve, unknown to us, who can tell? The atmosphere; the electric fluid; the gases; the waters of the deep; the noxious and poisonous secrets of the vegetable world, are all under His control, and a touch of His finger, or a breath from His mouth, *may* send some infinitely more fearful form of calamity than this sweeping over the nations.

(8.) This is to be regarded as an extraordinary means of arresting the attention of mankind. We become accustomed to His ordinary dispensations, and cease to be warned or alarmed. Men move on in the business of their farms or merchandize—amidst their pleasures and their books—though their fellows are dying around them with the ordinary diseases to which our race

is subject, as if disease were never to attack them, and as if they were never to die. Who is warned of his own death when others are cut off by consumption, or pleurisy, or fever? Who expects to die in that manner, and who, therefore, regards the death of his neighbor as a warning to himself? As a matter of fact, death by these ordinary and regular diseases fails to move the minds of men, and a funeral makes little or no impression on the living. God, then, has this other method of speaking to men in reserve—showing them that they are mortal; warning them to be ready to die; reminding them of the fact that the race is sinful, and calling on them to repent, and to prepare to meet Him. In this terrific scourge which is now going over the land, He shows them that no one is secure; that He can strike where He pleases, and that each one should "set his house in order." Nothing can be conceived of as better adapted to do this than this pestilential visitation, and if it does *not* have this effect it is only one proof added to thousands to show how man disregards his Maker, and how distasteful to him are all the methods which Divine mercy and judgment use to recall him from sin, and to teach him to prepare for heaven.

(4.) This visitation which has spread over our land, and over the world, has, in an eminent degree, this peculiarity as a Divine judgment—that it is of the nature of a proclamation in favor of virtue and piety. Far more than any other plague that has afflicted our race, it has a close connection with certain forms of vice, and selects its victims among the polluted and the abandoned. It is true that the rightous fall. It is true that the great and the good, the pure and the holy, are, in some instances, cut down. This is inevitable unless God should work a miracle to protect each one of his friends. But, in its general march through the earth, it has distinguished itself eminently from the plague, the sirocco, the tornado, the earthquake, and the ravages of famine. It has gone to the abodes of the debased and the profligate; it has sought out the miserable retreats of the intemperate and licentious; it has smitten down those who are worn out with vice, and whose frames, enervated by the indulgence of sensual passions, have prepared them easily to fall. To an extent which has occurred in no other extraordinary visitation of Heaven in this world, it has made a difference between the righteous and the wicked; between the unclean and the holy, and thus, in a degree, unknown in any other remarkable judgment, it falls in with the ordinary laws of the Divine administration—inflicting a penalty for a well-known and a marked offence against the laws of God. The best protector against it is temperance and religion: that temperance which has saved the frame from the ravages which licentious indulgence produces, and that religion which makes the mind calm in God. It is terrible in its

approaches to the intemperate and the debauchee; it is fearful in an almshouse or a jail; it is terrific in the haunts of vice and the places of low dissipation. To an extent which has occurred in no other pestilence with which the nations have been visited, have the remarkable declarations of the ninety-first Psalm been verified in this disease: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day, nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold, and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling." This fearful visitation is a preacher of temperance in all things,—temperance in eating; temperance in drinking; temperance in the government of the passions; and it comes, at a remarkable juncture to confirm *all* the lessons which have been proclaimed by the temperance societies in this age. It is a preacher of righteousness, and confirms the doctrines of Christianity about the duty of subduing the soul, and keeping it calm in God: for a fit of anger, a state of high excitement, or the indulgence of any ungoverned passion, is among the things that expose to its ravages. All the precautions that have been found of service against it, accord entirely with the sternest lessons of morality and religion, and the conclusions to which its march through the world would appropriately lead men are just such as God inculcates by his law, and would produce by the fair influence of his gospel. Not thus distinctly has He commonly visited men; not thus distinct are the lessons taught by the tornado or the earthquake.

And here it is not improper to notice the *comparative* solicitude which is felt in regard to the evil which, as a nation, we this day pray may be removed, above a far more fearful and destructive plague that pervades our land. We all feel the propriety of the services of this day, and all respond cheerfully to the voice which as summoned us to this house of prayer. We have been appalled by the evil that has come upon us. We trembled at its approach. We knew not which of our friends—which of us—it was commissioned to cut down. We sought the means of warding off the scourge; guarded our ports; cleaned our cities; built hospitals; sought the best medical aid; removed the probable instigators of the plague; called upon God in our families, and in our regular public devotions, and now do it

in a more set and solemn manner by this extraordinary day of devotion. Meantime there has been in our land—there is still—a scourge far more dreadful than this, about which the nation feels little alarm, and for which it has set apart no season of special prayer. This Asiatic scourge visited us seventeen years ago, and then departed. It cut down a few thousands, and then left us. It makes no one vicious; is connected on the part of no one with criminality. That more fearful scourge of which I speak is with us year by year. It never leaves us. It has spread all over the land. It demands some thirty thousand annual victims; many of them among the brightest men of the land. It fills our prisons; our almshouses; our grave-yards. It makes widows, orphans, wretched homes, wretched graves—the homes and the graves of drunkards. It is the parent of poverty, and disease, and crime, and death; and where this Asiatic scourge has demanded one victim, that has required and received more than ten. Yet the public is not alarmed. The voice of the magistrate does not summon us to the house of prayer on account of the evil; even the warning voice of the ministers of God is well-nigh silent in regard to it. How small an evil is this Asiatic scourge compared with intemperance! Yet how differently are they treated and regarded! Against the one we use every precaution; the other we sustain by laws, and invite and cherish by high example, and prevailing customs. Fountains of poison are opened on every highway, and at every corner of the street; and every art is resorted to, to induce the young, the vigorous, the talented, and the promising, to become the victims of the curse. Splendid houses are reared in public places; and the fascination is spread before our sons everywhere, and at all times; and no man can feel that his dearest friend is secure. On the Sabbath, and on every day and every night in the week, the allurement is spread around us; and while we are unconcerned, the curse is cutting down its thousands and its tens of thousands. Suppose the same course could be, and actually were pursued by any class of citizens in regard to this Asiatic cholera. I see a magnificent house erected in a central, and attractive, and much-thronged place in this city. I see it fitted up with every appliance of taste and art. I see it richly carpeted, and splendidly furnished. I see its doors open day and night—on the weekday and on the Sabbath, and always thronged. I see a multitude of young men there—the pride and the hope of their families. I ask what this is; what it means? Let it be told that it is a place where, for money, men are scattering this Asiatic cholera—where they are retailing that which will be certain to cut down victim after victim, and to spread this direful pestilence through the land. With what indignant feelings

would such a place be regarded! How long would it be tolerated! And yet this would be a trifling evil—a curse not worth naming compared with the evils spread over the land by the dealers in alcoholic drinks. The numbers are not by far so many; the sufferings are less; the tears shed are fewer; the range of evils is infinitely more limited. This Asiatic cholera of itself produces no cursing; no crimes; no poverty; no debasement of character; it breaks no heart of a parent over the profligacy of a child; it cuts no man off from communion with God, and sends no man to hell.

Yet in view of the scourge with which our land is visited, there is an obvious propriety that we should come before God in the manner in which we have done this day. It was meet that in view of the ravages of this destroyer, the Chief Magistrate of a Christian nation should summon the people to their places of worship to pray. It is God who has commissioned this scourge to go forth; God who directs its march; God who designates its victims; God who conceals the laws of its movements from us; and God who alone can remove it. He comes forth that we may recognize his hand in the affairs of nations; that He may teach men their dependence, and show them how fearful are the tokens of his wrath. By the same power by which He brought it upon us, He can continue it; and with the same ease with which he has caused it to spread over the nations, he can cause it to retire. Dependent, then, as we are; sinful as we are; deserving of reproof as we are, it becomes us to approach Him this day with true repentance, and to pray that he will remove the scourge. It may, however, still linger—hanging over us, lest we too soon forget our sins and our repentings. It may, it probably will, have other victims, before it departs. And in the *manner* of its departure, when it does go, it is commonly as marked and peculiar as it is in its approach. Here and there as it recedes, it suddenly strikes down its isolated victims, often selecting its most illustrious and its brightest victims as it retires from a land. As if not content with the numbers of the profligate and the intemperate that it has slain; as if dissatisfied that it has gone into the abodes of filth and poverty, as it has done, it selects here and there a victim higher in this world's estimation, and its last trophies are often among its most illustrious. Neither strength, nor beauty, nor piety can stand before it; and the bright and promising boy, the lovely maiden, the man of tried virtue, the pillar of the church, the support of the state, the self-denying and the skilful physician suddenly falls. Let us not, then, vaunt ourselves in any fancied security, as if *we* were exempt; but let us feel that, like a flash of lightning emitted from the departing storm, this fearful scourge may yet arrest any one of us, and summon us before our Judge. Happy they, and they only, who, whether they live through the

pestilence or die, have a well-founded hope of heaven in Christ Jesus; who, with a mind calm in God, and with a solid hope of future holiness and happiness, are at all times found ready for their change.

SERMON DVII.

BY REV. C. WHITEHEAD,

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THE DIGNITY AND HOPE OF THE CHRISTIAN.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."—1 JOHN, iii. 2.

MEN of this world, deceived by the dazzling appendages of earthly greatness, behold not the real dignity of the child of God, nor appreciate the privileges that flow from so glorious a relationship. Hence the humble disciple of Jesus, though an heir to the unfading inheritance of heaven, is often regarded with indifference, and his professions of peace and joy are treated as the effusions of enthusiasm. "The world knoweth us not."

This mere negative feeling is, however, the mildest form of that opposition which the unregenerate world cherishes towards those who are inspired by the hopes and governed by the principles of the gospel. Often it degenerates into pity, sometimes into contempt, and even into deep-rooted enmity. In the early ages of Christianity such was the hostility of its adversaries that it goaded them on to bitter persecution, and glutted itself in the groans and agonies of the expiring martyr.

The Saviour exhibits the moral turpitude of such feelings, by tracing them to their origin—an aversion to Himself,—"Marvel not if the world hate you; ye know it hated me before it hated you." The Apostle John discovers the same connection. Speaking of Christians sustaining to God the relationship of sons, he adds, "therefore the world knoweth us not because it knew him not."

But mark the contrast between the judgment of the world, misled by sin, and the judgment of the believer, directed by grace. That very relationship which men dispise, is the subject of his

exulting gratitude. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" Under the very trial of being thus lightly esteemed the apostle would flee for consolation to the cheering thought of his own present adoption and the glory growing out of it. As if he had said, Though we are obscure and unknown, though the world values not our religion, and the principles we profess expose us to disrepute, contumely or death; yet how great is our honor, how exalted our hopes! "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."—The passage leads us to consider,

I. The relation which the Christian sustains to God in this world. "Now are we the sons of God." So are all men by creation and providence.

1. But Christians are the sons of God by a new, a spiritual birth, being born again from above. The Holy Spirit implants in them the principle of life; a principle powerful in its influence, universal in its control, and abiding—the germ of life eternal. Its operation commences with the first exercise of saving faith, by which the soul becomes united to an ever-living Redeemer: "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

They are made partakers of the Divine nature, not in its essence but in its gracious qualities. The disposition and excellencies of the blessed God are produced in his believing people by the Holy Ghost, who creates them after God in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. The clear discernment of spiritual things which belongs to God; his spotless purity, and perfect rectitude; and his truth, benevolence, and love, are, in a degree, the distinguishing characteristics of Christians, who thus like children bear the likeness of the Father. All the lovely features of the moral image of God are impressed on the newborn soul, and furnish the evidence of its adoption. But where these are wanting, it is in vain to claim the relationship of sons; "for," saith the apostle, "whosoever is born of God sinneth not." "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother."

2. Christians are also the sons of God by a special act of adoption. He has taken them from the family of strangers, yea of enemies, who had no claim upon his favor, and having brought them nigh by the blood of Christ, he has transferred them into the household of faith; and condescends to own them as his

children, the sons and the daughters of the Lord Almighty. To secure this privilege, he gave his only begotten Son to die for us. "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." By his sufferings and death the gracious Redeemer satisfied the demands of Infinite Justice, so that God could receive all who believe into his embrace, and thus enable them from being children of wrath, to become the children of God by faith in his Son. Though before, they were aliens and enemies, by reason of wicked works, the slaves of Satan and condemned to eternal death, yet *now* are they the "sons of God," What an honorable distinction! The sons of God! Men are ambitious to trace their genealogy to some illustrious parentage; and the descendants of the great pride themselves in being of royal blood. Is it a light thing, asked David, that I should be son-in-law to the King? But earthly nobility usually derives its lustre from achievements whose glory is as transient as it is brilliant, and if traced back to its origin must terminate in Adam, the common parent of the noble and the ignoble.

But our relation to God confers real and durable honor, compared with which the magnificent titles of the world are perishable shadows. He who can trace upon the exercises of his heart and the practice of his life the credentials of his heavenly birth, and can claim a lineage with the Eternal God, bears a nobler record than ever stamped the escutcheon of the mightiest monarch of the world. The humble believer is a child of the King of kings. He may reflect with amazement upon the majesty and dominion of God. He may survey the face of nature, teeming with the productions of his wisdom, and gaze with adoring admiration on unnumbered worlds, moving through the immensity of space, and think of myriads of beings over whom the omnipotent Sovereign extends his government, and then say, This is my Father, He made them all.

What happiness is secured by this exalted connection. It implies the most devoted affection and forgiving grace. "I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." It furnishes the sweetest consolation in affliction. "What son is there whom the Father chasteneth not?" It is the strongest encouragment to confidential intercourse with God; for it is the privilege of his children to come into the secret place of the Most High, to enter into his chamber and see the King in his beauty. Encouraged by his promise, the Christian may approach with boldness to the mercy seat, unfold the secret burdens of his heart, and with the spirit of adoption cry, "Abba Father."—Consider in the,

II. The honor and happiness which the Christian has in prospect. Eternal glory in heaven is the legacy to which the Christian is entitled by virtue of his sonship. "And if children," says Paul, "then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." And that believers may be assured of their ultimately taking possession of the celestial estate, he adds, "reserved by God for you who are kept by Almighty power through faith unto salvation."

But who can describe the joys of heaven? What tongue can tell the blissful sights and rapturous sounds which there break upon the ravished eye and ear of God's redeemed ones? What pencil can delineate the lofty hills and extended plains of that land of pure delight? Who can paint the groves and bowers of Paradise? or the crystal waters of that river of life, which issues from the throne of God? What tongue can tell the splendors of that city whose pavement is of pure gold? or what mind can conceive the melody of those songs which shall echo harmoniously through the temple of God? "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." We know not the precise nature of those glorified bodies with which we shall be adorned. We know not to what extent the faculties and powers of our being will be enlarged; what influence the attachments of this world will have upon the intercourse of heaven; nor what will constitute the employment of eternity; nor a thousand other things pertaining to the spiritual world. Neither is it desirable that we should. We have enough to encourage hope, and incite to diligent effort, in what is revealed; enough to sustain in sorrow, and awaken in the lively Christian a desire to depart and be with Christ. It is enough to know that we shall be like Christ: that in his presence there is fulness of joy and at his right hand pleasures for evermore.

The wisdom and kindness of God are manifest in withholding from us now the full knowledge of what is comprised in the blessedness of the heavenly world. Such knowledge could only be acquired by actual inspection. And were the realities of heaven open to our view, there would be no demand for the exercise of faith in the representations of the Scriptures. God would have us live by faith, looking not at the things that are seen but at the things that are unseen. Faith in His Word is the basis of piety, being the acknowledgment of God's veracity: while unbelief charges him with falsehood. Instead of calling forth our efforts in the pursuit of heaven by unvailing to our eyes its marvellous scenes, or delighting our ears with its melodious songs, he simply tells us something of its hidden glories; and proffers them to our acceptance; that thus believing his word we may seek the better country and press forward to obtain the crown. The ancient saints lived and died in faith, not having received the promises (the things promised) but having seen them afar off, and

were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Christians now are required to live by faith in the promises of God, and to rest by faith upon him who is invisible. And great glory will redound to God when the trial of their faith shall be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ, when it shall be manifest that they who had not *seen* him, yet loved him, and though they beheld not the inheritance promised, yet believing they rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

There is kindness, too, in confining us to a feeble and imperfect conception of our future exaltation. For how could we have borne up under all the trials of life; how have performed the self-denying duties of life? or waited with patience our appointed time until our change come, if the glory of the heavenly state had been fully revealed to us? Did it fully appear what we shall be; did we perfectly comprehend the ineffable glory and bliss of heaven; did we truly know what it is to gaze upon the effulgent face of the Redeemer; to see the throng of happy saints and be ourselves among the holy and rejoicing brotherhood above,—we should be disqualified for the duties belonging to our present condition, discontented and fretful under the adversities of life,—impatient to retire from the field of battle before the victory be won, and to receive the reward before the period of service be expired. While we admire then the wisdom, let us also praise the goodness of the Lord, who, while he permits us to say, "Now are we the sons of God," obliges us also to add, "and it doth not yet appear what we shall be."

Although it doth not yet appear what we shall be, we know this much, that "when *he shall appear we shall be like him.*" The full discovery and enjoyment of the promised glory is reserved unto the second coming of our Elder Brother. He has gone to heaven as our Forerunner, to prepare mansions for his people, and will come again to receive them to himself. Hence the revelation of Jesus Christ is exhibited in the Scriptures as the consummation of all our hopes, and the completion of his great salvation. Hence, too, we are encouraged to look for, to wait for, and to love his appearing. Paul, on the eve of martyrdom, triumphantly exclaims, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing." When the Saviour shall thus appear we shall be like *him*. Transporting thought! for in him all excellence and glory meet, rendering him the joy of heaven, and the object of love and praise to all holy beings.

But wherein shall this likeness consist? The apostle refers no doubt to an assimilation of the moral character. The point of resemblance most desirable to a truly pious mind, will be the per-

fect freedom from sin which will distinguish all the redeemed in common with their spotless Saviour. Sin has been the burden of the Christian through the whole of his earthly pilgrimage; but resting on the promise of his faithful Saviour, he knows he will be ultimately rescued from its power. Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify, and cleanse it, and present it to himself, a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Now, the object of his death will be accomplished in the perfect holiness of his people. No sinful act will ever mar their lovely characters,—no impure thought or affection disturb the serenity of their breasts. As Jesus is holy, so will they reflect the bright lustre of his face.

Christians will also resemble Christ in the fervent and unceasing affection of their hearts. The inhabitants of that blessed world will vie with each other in love toward the great Supreme, and one unbroken cord of attachment will bind together the vast fraternity of the redeemed, who will know no other feeling than that of pure and ardent affection.

They will also resemble their Divine Lord in happiness, glory, and immortality. No disappointment, sorrow or pain will cast a moment's shade upon the mind. With capacities enlarged for their exalted state, they will drink in satisfying streams from the exhaustless fountain of life and joy. Honor will be put upon them as the sons of God. With crowns of glory on their heads, palms of victory in their hands, and hallelujahs upon their lips, they will follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. His glory they will behold,—his praises celebrate day and night for ever.

The *ground* of this assimilation. "We shall be like him, for we shall *see him as he is*." Our likeness to Christ will result from our sight of him. Intercourse produces resemblance. We often see this illustrated in the intercourse of friends. Persons enjoying frequent intercourse and mutually attached will gradually acquire a conformity in sentiments, feelings, and habits. Their souls will come to possess oneness of feeling and character. Thus, too, the communion of Christians with their blessed Redeemer produces a correspondence in the principles, feelings, and thoughts of the soul. Even in this world this effect is partially apparent. The believer, by living near to Christ, beholding by faith his adorable charms, praying to him in secret, reading his word, and meditating upon his endearing worth,—rises by degrees towards the same excellence. "Beholding as in a glass the glory of God, they are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." But when the saints shall be exalted to the immediate presence of God; when at the revelation of Jesus Christ, they shall see him, not through a glass darkly but face to face, and maintain intimate and uninterrupted communion

with him, they will be fully like him, as far as the creature can resemble the infinitely glorious Creator.

What the precise nature of that sight is which the saints shall have of God, in heaven, we know not. We have reason to believe, however, that they will see the glorified body of their Saviour; and, as on earth the Lord Jesus is the medium of God's manifestations and blessings to his people, it is not improbable, that the peculiar discoveries of his glory in heaven will be made through the person of his Son, whom we shall see for ourselves, through the organs of our refined and glorified bodies. But beside this view of God through the bodily organs, there will be discoveries of the Divine perfections to the mind, which will elevate and transport it with sentiments of sublime and holy adoration.

And this sight will be *transforming*. If the face of Moses shone with a brightness that could not be looked upon, when he came down from the presence of God on Mount Sinai, how will the souls of the redeemed reflect the beams of that face which they shall behold when standing before the throne of glory! The infinite purity of God will beget a correspondent purity in them. The effulgent beams of Divine Love will fill them with unquenchable and perfect affection. The vision of God's smiling face will dry up every tear of sorrow, and conform the soul to him in happiness as well as holiness; while the presence of the ever-living Redeemer, who is the tree of life, in the midst of the garden, will give immortality to every joy, and secure to each of heaven's inhabitants the priceless boon of Everlasting Life.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. Let Christians admire the grace of God in elevating them to this dignity, and these precious hopes. The sons of God! distinguishing title. This is the new name, written upon the white stone given to him that overcometh, which no man knoweth saving him that receiveth it. Happy they, who, in tracing the features of their character, can discern the evidences of their sonship. Let them look at the relationship in all the enjoyments it insures, the hopes it awakens, the honors to which it exalts, and then with admiring gratitude exclaim with the apostle, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." What manner of love! How free, how unmerited, how expensive! Upon *us* who were violating his laws, despising his mercy, and rejecting his Son, that *we* should be called the sons of God. It would be suprising condescension in an earthly Prince, to take a child of obscure and poor parentage and call it his own; but that the Almighty Sovereign of the Universe should take his enemies and make them his

children; that he should rescue them from the devouring gulf of ruin and make them the heirs of life, is compassion and grace worthy of Him who is love itself. When we consider that in doing this he must part with his only begotten and dearly beloved Son; that he must leave heaven to make room for us; that he must be sacrificed that we might be saved; that he must become a servant and a curse that we might be the children of the King, —we are lost in wonder, love, and praise.

2. The subject furnishes rich consolation in trial. A child of God—an heir of glory! What peace and comfort belong to such an one. His is the privilege of crying, Abba Father! and regarding each affliction as the expression of covenant love,—for whom the Lord loves he rebukes and chastens. Afflictions are the tokens of his sonship, and designed to promote his sanctification. Ere long the end of his trials will be accomplished. The gold will be so far purified from the dross of corruption, so burnished and lustred by the hand of the Divine Refiner, that it will reflect, as a mirror, the image of the Saviour. Having completed the work of grace, he will remove its subject from earth to heaven, and place it among the vessels of glory in the upper sanctuary. In that glorious residence of the King, perfect purity and blessedness forever reign. There the saints shall enjoy the beatific vision of the Lamb. "God himself shall be with them, and be their God; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

3. Having this hope, let the children of God purify themselves even as he is pure. Ever bear in mind, brethren, your Divine relationship, and walk worthy of your holy calling. In all the intercourse of life, carry in your hearts warm affections, a lively image of the blessed God: dwell upon his glory, his kindness, his love—and then carefully refrain from doing anything unworthy of such a Father. "Be blameless, and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world."

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SERMON DVIII.*

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LENOX, MASS.

THE REVEALING PROCESS.

"There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid that shall not be known."—LUKE, 12: 2.

THERE is a tendency in things everywhere to manifest their natures, and make themselves known. Seeds that are buried, seek the light; shells deep in the sea grope their way to the shore: the processes of nature are to bring things to the surface, as if that which is underground could not be kept in the dark; even the hoary rocks are laid bare to the eye, and what was once the centre of the earth is soon the top of its mountains. The working of things is to work all things out. There is a kind of natural resurrection going on all the while, as if time and material forces were taking off all coverings, and laying all foundations bare.

What is true in matter has certainly its counterpart in mind. Human character, notwithstanding all efforts to keep itself back, also tends to development; what is not seen at once is found out in a life-time. The strong passions of the soul, like smothered fires or hidden springs, at last burst their way through, and become known. Hence, men that live long together, as a general thing, fairly estimate one another; the evolutions of time with the trials of life, draw the character forth, and make it manifest.

There is certainly going on around us in the operations of nature and in the unfolding of events, a revealing process, as if creation and Providence had determined to let light into all dark places, and at last *uncover human hearts*. This, we suppose, is the general idea taught in the text. "There is nothing hid which shall not be revealed," was a proverb among the Jews. Once the Saviour used these words, to en-

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courage the disciples, when their instructions were despised and their principles rejected. "Fear not," he says, "that which is whispered in secret shall be proclaimed from the house-top." The religion you preach shall spread and triumph, though now trodden under foot, and hiding in the caves; and though now persecuted and calumniated, your purposes and principles shall at last be vindicated before the universe.

Another time when he used the words, was that referred to in the text. The Pharasees stood before him, surrounded by the multitude. They had shown themselves both deceitful and wicked; they had done great wrong, and knew that they had, and yet claimed to be the chosen of the Lord. They endeavored to hide their real deformity under a fair exterior, and succeeded so well, that the Saviour said, "They are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them." Then began he to announce the doctrine of a revelation at a future day, when things should appear as they are, and to say unto his disciples, "Beware ye, for there is *nothing covered* that shall not be revealed." He pointed their minds not only to the general idea of a development and resurrection of things concealed, but he speaks with a pointedness and particularity which implied that the *minutest* acts and *all* of them should be revealed, to the last item, and without the possibility of any obscuration. The words are, "There is NOTHING hid which shall not be revealed;—that which is spoken *in the ear in the closet*, shall be proclaimed upon the *house-tops*." It is as if he had said: the whole past history of each mind, with all the deeds done in the body, shall at some time be made to pass before itself and the universe; and it is to the illustration and enforcement of this idea that we now ask your attention, viz:—*That the minutest exercises and acts of each mind, unless forgiven, will, at some time, be clearly and fully displayed.*

1. There are revealing processes going on *in the world around us*, and under circumstances which make it exceedingly probable that, in the world to come, they will continue to go on with accelerated and overwhelming power.

There are revealing processes going on in the world around us. Events are ordered by Providence in this life, as if they were designed to bring hidden things to light. One fact often discloses a great deal, when brought into connection with another fact, which, when it stood by itself, told nothing. The ancient kings of the East were aware of this, when they sent messages from one to another on business which they wished to be kept secret from all but themselves. The message was written upon a piece of parchment but so written that it could not be deciphered unless first

bound upon a staff, which contained a counterpart and key to that which was sent, and each king kept one of these staffs; hence, if the messenger should lose the scrip, the secret would not be divulged, because not intelligible, unless wrapped around the wood: the one was read by the help of the other, though each spake nothing by itself. So is it with the events in human life; they throw light upon each other when brought together, though, when apart, they may divulge nothing. Some circumstance, in itself unimportant, and having but little connection with the main issue, has been the means of revealing that which, though searched for with dilligence had been concealed for years.

For a long period, the sin of the brethren of Joseph in selling him to the Egyptians, had been covered over; none doubted their story—all thought him dead—even his father mourned for him, as for a child whose face he was to see no more; there were none, therefore, to make inquiry; those who would most naturally search into the matter were completely beguiled, and the transaction had become a thing long gone by; but, at length, corn was to be bought, for there was a scarcity in Judea, and Egypt was the grain-growing country, and they were directed, very naturally, to him who had charge of the provisions under the king, and this man, to their astonishment and confusion, was Joseph, their brother; the deed, though done long before, could no longer be concealed. Joseph must see his father—the story must be told, and the transaction which had long been covered, was at last revealed. The records of our criminal courts are full of evidence to the same point. The mere knife that a father dropped in a forest, after he had murdered his friend, recognized twenty years after, by his own child, who was very young at the time, as his father's knife, led to the detection and punishment of the criminal, when old and gray-headed.

Often times the *mind is made to betray itself* by its vanity, or anxiety, or remorse. Sometimes its vanity leads to its detection. Men that have distinguished themselves in any line, however criminal, not unfrequently boast of their exploits; prisoners in their confinement recount their deeds of darkness to each other, that their prowess may be acknowledged, and even when hopefully better men, they still seem to take a delight in detailing their wicked deeds, that the good may wonder at the greatness of their change, and in both cases the deeds are developed. Thus, often the criminal who had escaped the vigilence of the law, is brought to punishment by his own loquacity.

What vanity does not accomplish is sometimes brought about by fear, or envy, stimulating the cunning to over-reach itself. In a recent murder at New Haven, the young man

who was guilty of the deed, took pains to present himself, of his own accord, at the office of justice, and offered to aid in the detection of the culprit, but he over-acted; this very readiness, which he had hoped would disarm suspicion, first excited it, and finally led to his detection and condemnation.

There is one other element of mind which has contributed more than all the rest, to remove, in this world, the covering from deeds of darkness, however deeply buried, or difficult to discover, and that is, *the remorse of a guilty and violated conscience.* Notwithstanding the authority and vigilence of the officers of justice, and the scrutiny of human courts of law (which also form a part of the vast and complicated earthly economy for revealing sin); notwithstanding the interrogations of the learned counsel, and the array of armed forces, and the apprehensions of imprisonment and death more dreadful truth has been elicited by the remorseful agonies of a guilty conscience, than by all the processes and power of judicial tribunals combined. The deed which brings the criminal to execution, is often but one of a hundred which would never have been revealed in this life but for his own remorseful confessions. It is said that the majority of criminals confined now in our prison-houses, and condemned to die, will be found to be there on the testimony of their own words, forced from them by the anguish of a wounded spirit.

Thus, from the constitution of the human soul with its inward monitor and avenger—from the communicativeness of facts when brought together—from the bursting and unwrapping processes in the material world, as seeds, and rocks, and buried empires break their coverings, and come out into day: from this array of evidence, coming from every side in this world, we think we hear the heralding of more clear and terrific disclosures, when all the secrets of every heart shall be revealed. The laws begun on earth are the type and exemplification, if not the initiatory and promonitory workings of those endless processes which move on with accelerated and stupendous results on the other side of the grave. Hence we say, that, even in this world, the disclosures are so frequent and unexpected, as to make it exceedingly probable at least, that in the next, "there shall be nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be made known."

II. But when we take into consideration another fact namely, *that all the hindrances which prevented a perfect revelation of the character, in this world, will, in the* NEXT, BE REMOVED; then, that which just now appeared a dangerous probability, becomes a dreadful certainty. Obstacles which in this life prevented a full disclosure of the deeds done

in the body, will, in the next, be wholly removed; and all the processes which contribute to development, will have full and unimpeded play.

The body will be removed. It is a well-known fact that in this life, the action of the mind is hindered by reason of its connection with its corporeal investiture. The soul is incarcerated, and often crippled by its dependence upon the body; and hence, when the system is excited by fever, or attenuated by disease, and the ordinary physical relations are, in a measure, broken up, the mind has been known to possess and manifest a power never conceived of in its habitual conditions; the silver chord has then, as it were, begun to loosen, and the latent powers have begun to be conscious of their strength. Now, in the eternal world, the corporeal hindrances will be all removed—the ponderous envelope will be wholly shaken off; that which was insensible and dormant, by reason of its earthly tabernacle, will quiver then with an intense and terrific life; and every faculty of the mind which had been hindered and clouded, will contribute of its treasures and strength to consummate the stupendous purposes of God. Forgetfulness will be removed. Memory will then give up its dead. What had been buried and forgotten will rise again to view in multitudinous and condemnatory array; as the history of a past life, with all its painful and oblivious scenes, sometimes forces its way into the minds of dying men, with a terrible and avenging clearness, and will not let them rest, so we have every reason to believe that when the body is removed, and sickness interposes no restraint, the mind will recall, with fearful distinctness, its minutest and most forgotten deeds, and and all that was here scattered through a life, will then be collected into one single and burning point of time.

All lost evidence will be supplied. In this world, not only are important facts kept out of sight, by the death or absence of witnesses, but after the transaction has long gone by, something often transpires which, had it appeared at the time, would have changed the whole face and issue of the case. But, in the world to come, no witnesses will be absent; all that can be gathered will be there; and all that bears upon the case will be concentrated and arranged into one connected line of light and fire. The evidence will all be there, and close at hand. All diverting associations will be removed; the green earth will have passed away—the mild skies will have been folded up—the faces which spoke of pity for the criminal, to the last, will not be there—the voices of men will have ceased—the hopes and passions of time will have come to an end; none of those passing incidents which broke for a moment the train of condemnatory thoughts in this life, will be found in the world to come; the mind will have full

and unimpeded action upon itself; reflection will not be broken in upon; conscience will not be diverted from its work; withal, one thing will be visible there, which was not seen here—the *eye* which saw the deeds of darkness, though itself unseen, will there gleam on the offender, face to face; over all the vast assembly will be seen an awful splendor, that rebuking or approving Presence which, in this world no man can look upon and live.

Now, if there are ever any combinations of circumstances which can force from the soul, the story of its sins—if there is any law of mind which makes the child find relief only in confession, and which necessitates the criminal on the scaffold, notwithstanding the presence of friends, and the sight of old scenes, and some faint hope of rescue, to utter forth, in ignominy and shame, the dark history of his life; if even Judas Iscariot, though he saw but a small part of the injury he had done, had to seek out the chief priests, and with his own lips make acknowledgment of his own guilt; if even in such a world as this, where the body, and old associations, and friends, and forgetfulness, and ignorance of the consequences, contribute to quiet the goadings of conscience, men are still driven by remorse, to give a detailed and minute account of the evil they have done, what may not be expected when, with conscience all alive, and memory quickened, the soul dismantled of its clay, stung by its sins, bereft of friends, and hindered by nothing, meets the eye of its Maker without a veil; if the mere toll of a bell, and the sight of soldiery, and the approach of a dissolution which, after all, might not take place, has unloosened the tongues of hardened criminals, and made the soul its own accuser in the presence of a scornful crowd, what disclosures may not be expected when, as the trumpet sounds, and nature dissolves, and the aged heavens are wrapt in flame, the mind begins to feel the pressure of an endless and a hopeless doom? Will not the story of wrong and rapine, of sin and deceit, leap forth like the untombed dead; and the Scripture, "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee," be literally fulfilled? Surely there is a provision in our nature, by reason of which every one shall give an account of himself unto God.

If, with memory quickened, only for a moment, the conscience gathers up here and there a delinquency, scattered along the path of life, and speaks it out, shall we be surprised, if in the light of eternity, remorse should reveal to the wondering angels, transgressions thick and dark as bursting clouds and big with tempest? If this is not an ordering of our mental economy, by which, at some time, that which is spoken in the ear in closets, shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops, where can it be found?

III. Much of the Bible is written and all probation arranged with reference to a judgment in the midst of minute and amazing revelations. If the inspired preacher sees by the way-side, a youth revelling in riotous plesures of unfettered indulgence, heedless of the admonitions of conscience and of religion, he reminds him that those scenes of sinful delight must come up again : "Rejoice, O young man in thy youth, and let thy heart clear thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes, but know thou, that *for all these things* God will bring thee into judgment" There is a foretokening all along our earthly way. If the wicked hear a "dreadful sound," what does he hear? If he sees a hand others do not see, what is it that he sees? The fear of God is not before his eyes and yet he is afraid. There was a sound, a rustle of a leaf, yet to him a sound that spoke of discovery—a whisper of betrayal and development ; he sees things around him working to the surface. Even a stain upon his robe, a paler hue upon his cheek, may have a voice to some one ; many things have come out in ways most unexpected—and who shall say, after all, he may not have been observed? Perhaps the words of the aged preacher peal again upon his soul—"Every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." It would not be strange if many events should now begin to speak to him of judgment, and point towards the revelations of the great day ; if he continues to reflect, all things will begin to arrange themselves with reference to the time which will "bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart ;" he begins to think that things which are not finished here, may be finished hereafter. Though much is shrouded in darkness, and the murderer and his victim sleep in the sea, yet so many things are revealed. The laws of justice are so mighty and manifest, moving all around him, and moving on with such unfaltering step, the responses of his own soul to the whispers in society, and to the pointings of creation, are so clear and loud, that he is not at all surprised when he hears it announced—"For every idle word which men shall speak, shall they give account : " "whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light;" and, "the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and the grave the dead which were in them, and they were judged, every man "according to his works," out of the things that were written in the books. Be not surprised if you hear him repeating to himself—"Every man's work shall be made manifest, and the fire shall try it, of what sort it is," and, if necessary, it shall be revealed by fire. He is coming under the power of a great law, which is stronger than he is.

Depend upon it, my friends, there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be made known.

IV. Finally, if there were no books with man's deeds recorded in them, no conscience in the soul to urge them forth, no witnesses to testify, and no formal sentence to be pronounced and vindicated, still the future condition of the soul will itself point back to specific acts of sin or righteousness on earth, as the ground of its peculiar destiny.

The future condition of the soul will REVEAL as well as *avenge* what was done to the body. We have evidence in the Bible and in nature, that the coming state of the mind will bear a strict and definite relation to its exercise in the present world; as specific as is the conformity of the harvest in the field to the seeds that are sown on it, so that from the issues which will transpire in eternity, we may know with great certainty what was enacted amidst the probationary scenes of time. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap; if he sows to the flesh, he shall of the flesh reap corruption; if he sows to the spirit, he shall of the spirit reap life everlasting. Now, if in this world men suffer in the line of their sins and rejoice in the line of their good deeds,—if the drunkard's trembling body reveals to us the nature of his transgression,—if the lonely desertion of the miser is the natural as well as the judicial consequence of his own protracted withdrawal of kindly sympathy from his race,—if, when by our laws the blood of one is shed in retribution, we know that it is because he has already shed man's blood,—if the maledictions that come upon the outcast Jew are only the echo and the re-production of his own maledictions on the Son of God,—if measure for measure, scorn for scorn, blessing for blessing, cursing for cursing, is the law of God's moral administration on earth, why shall it not be so hereafter? so that whosoever is ashamed of the Son of Man in this world, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he comes in the clouds of heaven?

There are indications plain and numerous in the Bible, that the results hereafter shall show, the kind as well as the degree of sin committed. The prophet says: Therefore it is come to pass that as I cried and they would not hear, so they cry and I will not hear, saith the Lord of Hosts. If the righteous, as stars, differ from each other in their degree and kind of glory, why may not the lost differ in the degree and nature of their shame? If it was fitting and just that he who would, without cause, have condemned Mordecai to the gallows, should himself hang upon the gallows; if it was fitting that those who placed in the fire three innocent young men, should themselves burn in the flame;

if it was congruous that those who gave Daniel to the lions, should themselves be devoured by lions; if Judas, sowing here a violated conscience; had to reap a harvest of dreadful remorse, why is it not both rational and Scriptural that, in the world to come, there shall be a strict correspondence between the nature of the crime and the character of the retribution? And if so, the reward or punishment will, of itself, by its correspondencies, reveal the nature of the deed for which it is awarded. It gives more meaning to the scenes of eternity, and does not go beyond the meaning of Scripture to say, that in a most literal and characteristic sense, whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Such is the nature of moral government, that the reward or retribution to come, must be proportionate and corresponding to the deeds done in the body. Hell is then but the reproduction and judicial consequence of particular sins, the harvest from single transgression; a harvest which determines whilst it multiplies the transgressions, and thus corroborates the truth that, "there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be made known."

In this subject we find matter for anxious reflection to the wicked. It furnishes the matter for great solicitude to one who has never repented. The sins which he has committed, unless confessed and forgiven, must come out and be displayed, and in the most painful and humiliating form. There is every reason to believe that in the day of revelation he will be his own accuser. Not on the testimony of angels, nor by the witnessing of saints are we told he will be confounded, but standing trembling before the judgment bar and the assembled universe, he will stammer out his own sad and guilty story of deep transgression; out of his own mouth will he be condemned; and if he should attempt to conceal anything, the terrible harvest of avenging retribution will reveal the rest. Just as on earth, there are diseases and punishments, natural and judicial, which, whilst they avenge, reveal the sin; just as the inebriate's trembling limbs, and sometimes the maniac's frenzied words, indicate the cause of all their misery, so, in the endless moral harvests beyond the grave have we reason to believe that so strict will be the correspondence between the avenging consequences and the guilty deeds, that the one will reveal the other.

Now, in view of this awful day, what will you do, my impenitent friend? You have sinned; it will be known, in all its minuteness and all its extent, and to every eye; what will you do? What can you do, but confess your guilt here on earth into the ear of an offended God? Perhaps the thoughts of thine heart may be forgiven thee. They must be told at some time; for

every secret thing you must give account; why, then, is it not madness to defer the confession and renunciation until it it is dragged forth before the universe? Now, you may whisper it in silence into the ear of Him who is mighty to save: who has said to the penitent, Your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more. If it were possible to find some place where God is not; if it were possible for the unforgiven to elude the eye of the Omniscient, it would still not be wise to do it, so long as conscience lives to upbraid and torment; the darkness which would hide you from the Searcher of hearts would not hide you from your own soul; but when we know that if we ascend into the heavens God is there, and if we descend into the deep he is still there, that his eye seeth through the thick cloud, and the darkness and the light are alike open to his view, oh, what folly to defer repentance until it shall be too late! *Now* it is possible that the transgression, if confessed and mourned over with a godly sorrow, may be blotted out as a cloud from the sky, so that there shall no trace of it be left anywhere in all the universe of God. But, if this duty is deferred until your sins have become habitual, then cometh tribulation and anguish, indignation and wrath, upon every soul that doeth evil and repenteth not. I repeat it, my impenitent friend, the only reasonable course is now to confess and forsake your sins; it is only in this way you can be shielded from the dreadful revelations of the great day. Will you not take the matter into consideration? Will you not in the midst of alluring and destroying scenes inquire, "How shall it be in the end thereof?" Will you not cast your minds but a short distance beyond the present moment and remember, that although friends may look upon you now with pride, and God in his forbearance seem not to notice your delinquency, yet there is an hour coming, when, unless forgiven, friends will shrink away with shame from the form they once confided in, and God in grief will pronounce your doom.

I seem to hear the poet say:

When will man learn to bear
His heart nailed on his breast,
With all its lines of care
In nakedness confessed?
Why, in this vain mask
Of passion-wasted ate
Will no one dare the task
To speak [illegible]
[illegible]
His bosom as a shell!

[illegible] like [illegible] that are necessary and univer- [illegible] His good

acts will not be forgotten. God has treasured them up, and will bring them forth. A cup of cold water given to a disciple in the name of a disciple, shall not lose its reward. If you have to say, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? Verily, inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these, His brethren, ye have done unto Him.

SERMON DIX.

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PARENTS THE DIVINELY APPOINTED TEACHERS OF THEIR FAMILIES.

"Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon earth."—DEUT. xi, 18—21.

OF all the relations which man sustains in this life, no one is more important and responsible than the parental. For, as children in their early years are naturally entirely under the care of their parents, and are susceptible of impressions from the very dawn of observation, so from this very early period they are to be considered as in a school of instruction. As early impressions are also generally the most durable, so it will be found, as a general rule, that according to their tendency, so is the future character. Hence, if a child draws his first breath, and spends his early years under the baleful influence of a general neglect of God, or, it may be, of open impiety, the natural, and it may be said, the almost inevitable consequence of this will be, that he will grow up without any knowledge or fear of God, and live in the commission of the vices which he sees around him, as far as his physical and intellectual powers may enable him to commit them. And so far is this from being a matter of mere theory, that the history of unnumbered multitudes has so fully illustrated it as to put it beyond the possibility of being justly called in question. Hence the many instances of early profanity, and of youthful profligacy and crime, which may everywhere be seen around us, and which, if not checked, are ominous of the most fearful consequences with regard to the future state of society. A relation, therefore, which ex-

erts so powerful an influence for good or evil upon the future generations of the human race, cannot be otherwise than fearfully responsible. And as the sacred Scriptures are designed to point out the appropriate duties of every station and relation which men are called in Providence to fill, so we find that they contain many directions to parents, defining the duties which are incumbent upon them, and pointing out, with infallible precision, the mannar in which these duties should be discharged; and of these injunctions, the text forms a distinguished example. It may be regarded, indeed, as a command solemnly addressed by God to all parents, in reference to the duty which they owe to their offspring and the manner in which they are to perform it, and as pointing out the encouragement which they have, constantly to regard it. But before directing our attention to these, let us consider—

I. The light in which we ought to view the family relation. From the scope and design of the text, it is obvious that God contemplates the family as a school, in which the young immortal minds which he has committed to the care of parents, are to be trained for his service and for heaven This is obvious from the nature of the instruction which they are commanded to give them; and it is a great and fatal mistake to regard it in any other light. Indeed, such is the nature of the developments of the infant mind, that from the moment it becomes a sentient and observant being it is placed in a school of learning; and parents cannot alter this constitution of things. From the principles of perception and imitation, which begin to act at the very dawn of our being, it cannot be otherwise than that children should be learning from every object with which they are connected. And the character of the persons and objects with which they are constantly surrounded, will give direction and tone to their intellectual and moral being; for it is at this early period that the seeds of future character are planted—and thus the family is the nursery of those who will be the morose scourges of the world, and will descend at last into never ending infamy and woe, or of those who will be examples of all that is holy and lovely, prove signal blessings to their generation, and be made the heirs of heaven. Parents, therefore, should never forget, that the family is the school in which they are training the men and women of the future age, from whom the world will gain its votaries, the church its members, heaven its redeemed spirits, and hell its victims; and that their example, their very looks, as well as words and deeds, and every thing that surrounds the young immortal minds which are confided to their care, are making impressions which will be lasting as life, and which may ex-

tend their blissful or baleful influence on their eternal destiny. For, as the plant or twig is bent, so will be the tree when it grows to maturity; just so will it usually be found that, according as the infant mind is trained and bent either to good or to evil, just so will be its character in manhood. It is thus that the child becomes the parent of the future man. And, when we look at this subject in all its bearings on the church and on the world—on the future and eternal well-being or woe of our children—and on the joys and sorrows of parents themselves, we cannot fail to see that it is not possible for us to form too high an idea of its importance. What a weight of responsibility, therefore, is evidently connected with the parental relation, and how necessary and desirable is it that parents should duly feel it, and seek the qualifications which will enable them to serve their generation by raising up a seed for God and the church on earth and in heaven. Let us consider—

II. The teachers and their qualifications. While the text is evidently designed to lead us to contemplate the family as a school, when it says—"And ye shall teach them your children," it points out with no less clearness who the teachers are to be. We have already remarked, that children from the dawn of their observation, are learning from everything that surrounds them; and, as parents, in their earliest years, are most frequently with them, so in the nature of the case, they are also their graatest teachers. This, too, they may be without any design on their part. But, though this is unquestionably the case, yet our text contemplates something far higher than this, and enjoins a duty which must take precedence of eveay other that pertains to the parental relation; namely, the special and direct communication of that knowledge which God has revealed and commanded to be communicated to them. In multitudes of instances, however, it would seem as if the character of teacher were in a great measure dropt, in the present age, from that of the parental, whilst all our modern arrangements and appliances for training the young seem to have a strong tendency toward taking the formation of youthful character altogether out of the hands of parents. But, it should never be forgotten, that parents are constituted the teachers of their children by the express appointment of God, and that any arrangement that overlooks this great fact, or that sets aside this appointment, can neither be wise nor safe. The family, indeed, is the great primary school of the world, in which the infant mind receives its first impressions and its first lessons, by which it must, in the nature of the case, be in a great measure moulded. And in place of overlooking or setting aside this great fact, all our educational arrangements and appliances should

have a tendency to aid this, by rousing parents to pay a just measure of attention to it, and endeavoring to qualify them for the due performance of their duty in this matter. So plain and explicit, too, is the command of God, that no parent can be justified in neglecting or transferring the duty to others, unless he is placed in such circumstances as to incapacitate him for discharging it. So long, therefore, as it is said—"And ye shall teach them your children," parents are to be regardnd as the divinely appointed primary teachers of their offspring; and they cannot neglect or transfer this duty to others, without neglecting or setting aside the ordinance of God.

As God has thus clearly defined who are to be the teachers, so he has no less clearly pointed out what are to be their qualifications—"Therefore," says he, "shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes." In these words, we have a beautiful and highly instructive description of what every parent should be, as the head and instructor of his family. The words of God, thereby referring to the doctrines to he believed, the commands to be obeyed, the ordinances to be observed, the prophesies to be fulfilled, the promises to be realized, and the threatenings to be dreaded and shunned, are to be laid up in the heart and in the soul, that they may enlighten the understanding, regulate the conscience, and sanctify the affections, that they may from thence flow out into the actions of the life, and qualify them for teaching the whole will of God, and for being living examples of all that the Lord our God requires of us. The soul, in all its views, emotions and exercises, is to be entirely under their influence; and this it cannot be, without being at the same time "a living epistle of Christ, known and read of all" who behold it. The allusiou, also, to a sign or signet upon the hand, and frontlets between the eyes, beautifully illustrates the prominence which should be given to the "words of God," in their practical bearings on the life. The religious parent is not to be ashamed nor afraid to give the utmost prominence to his piety before his family. On the contrary, his deep and abiding reverence of God, his faith in Christ, and supreme love and devotedness to him and his cause, and his constant obedience to his commands and ordinances, in private as well as in public, are to mark all his course, and infuse their influence into his whole character, if, as a religious parent, he would be duly qualified for training up his children for God and for the church, either in this world or in heaven. Having thus glanced at the qualifications of the teachers, let us consider—

III. The matter and the manner of the teaching which

God has enjoined. "And you shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thine house, and upon thy gates." Such is the injunction of God on this all-important subject; and it is so plain, that he who runs may read it. In the present age, however, the great object which many of the leaders of public opinion seem to have in view, is to banish religion from education, and secularize it as much as possible, under the vain and groundless plea that it is too sacred to be mixed up with the common routine of instruction, or too difficult and sublime for the mind in childhood to have to do with it. But here, as in everything else in regard to which the depraved heart of man is left to judge for itself, "God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his ways as our ways." God says, "These my words, you shall teach your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up;" but no, say these modern theorists on the training of the infant and youthful mind; for this would be to preoccupy their mind with truths before they can be supposed capable of understanding them, and would therefore lead only to hypocracy. Or, if anything is to be said on the subject of religion, say they, why not confine it to the Sabbath and the sanctuary? Why should we be always talking about it? Is not this the sure way to disgust the young mind in reference to it, and to fill it with prejudices against it? But to all such objections, how plausible soever they may appear, it is enough to adduce the explicit command of the text. For, can we suppose, without being guilty of the grossest impiety, that the Creator of the human soul, and the unerring Judge of the universe, can be in error on such a subject as this, and that we can amend any of his institutions? The very thought is blasphemy; and the efforts which are made to carry it into execution are fearful acts of rebellion against God. If we had no relations to sustain, nor duties to perform, nor evils to dread, nor hopes to cherish, but those which arise from our connection with the present world, it might be all well enough to exclude God and his words from the family circle, and from all parental counsel, and warning, and example; but so long as it is true that the human soul is immortal; that, in consequence of the apostacy of our first parents, it enters this world in a state of sin; that it is prone to depart from God, even from its earliest days; that the world is full of errors and allurements calculated to lead to destruction; that it is not capable of guiding or saving itself and that the words of God alone point out

the way which leads to salvation here, and to glory hereafter, just so long will it be wise and necessary for parents not only to lay them up in their own heart and soul, but constantly to put forth their best efforts, in order to give them a place in the heart and soul of their own children. Nothing short of this, indeed, can prepare them even for the proper discharge of their secular duties of future life, or for safely mingling in its corrupting scenes, or for bearing its many disappointments and afflictions, or for securing the guidance and the blessing of God during it, and for at last closing it in peace, and entering on an eternity of glory and blessedness. The parent, then who duly feels his parental obligations, and endeavors to act up to them, will ever be dilligent in teaching the words of God to his children, speaking of them when he sits in his house, and when he walks with them by the way—when he lies down, and when he rises up; nor will he be ashamed to have them as ornaments or mementos upon the posts of his house, and upon his gates. The men of science or antiquarian research are not ashamed to have their habitations adorned with the emblems of their respective studies; and why should not the Christian have his ornaments and everything around him, proclaiming that God in Christ, and his words are all-in-all to him? Thus, should the family conversation, the family example, the family worship, the famliy instruction, and the family mansion in its ornaments, all conspire to train up our children in the words of God, that from their earliest days they may know, "the way in which they should go." In place of leaving them to the negetave and cheerless influence of a godless system of education, and to the consequent complete secularization of the heart, in all its aims and pursuits, the Christian parent will endeavor so to instruct his children, that they will never be able to recollect the period when these were unknown to them, or when their heart and conduct were not directed to a supreme regard to them. For surely it requires no argument to show that nothing is so worthy of engaging the first recollections of the mind as "the words of God," nor anything so important as to have the heart—before it is immerced in the cares and anxiety of life—fully brought under the guidance of God, the grace and the love of Christ, and the attractions of heaven. And to attain this, should elicit the daily efforts and the daily prayers of the Christian parent, as he sits in his house, or walks by the way, or lies down, or rises up. It is, indeed, to be the one great object that is to be ever before his mind, in reference to those whom God has placed under his care. Nor can this be done without experiencing the most ample reward. Let us, therefore, consider—

IV. The happiness which may be expected to result from this. "That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth." There are those who would make us believe that these, and all similar promises of a temporal nature, which we meet with under the Old Testament dispensation, have no place under the New, and that it is now vain to look for their fulfillment in the experience of any, no matter how faithful they are in discharging the duties with which they are connected. But so long as it is true that "in the keeping of God's commands there is a great reward," and that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of *the life that now is*, as well as of that which is to come," and that there is a natural adaptedness in a life of piety to promote the universal well-being of man, I cannot see how that such interpretations of Scripture can be according to truth. The pen of the Old Testament inspiration declares, that "the way of transgressors is hard," and that "many sorrows shall be to the wicked;" declarations which we find to be as true now, and as descriptive of the actual dealings of God with the various classes of transgressors of the present age, as ever they were in ancient times. And why should not those of an opposite character still hold equally true? Is it not as true now as ever it was, that "the Most High rules in the kingdom of men," and that his character in the government of the world is still the same? If parents, then, of the present age faithfully fulfil the duty which is enjoined in the text, we feel persuaded they may safely cherish the expectation "that their days, and the days of their children, will be multiplied, as the days of heaven upon the earth," just as long as may be for their good, and the glory of God. It is quite true, however, that the chief and most glorious part of "the recompense of the reward" is spiritual, and such as can be fully enjoyed only in the heavenly state; but this was as true of the Old as it is of the New dispensation; and the faithful Israelite, as well as the faithful Christian had to "look within the veil," for it. If it is a blessing, then, for parents to have their children preserved to them as the sources of hope and joy to them in future years; and a blessing to children long to enjoy the instruction, the example, and the prayers of parents, the faithful discharge of the duty enjoined in the text is surely far more likely to secure it than the neglect of it; for in this, as well as in everything else, we shall no doubt find the declaration to be verified: "Them that honor me I will honor; but they who despise me shall be lightly esteemed." But though this, we feel persuaded, is the only correct sentiment that can be entertained on this part of the subject, viewed as a matter of Divine promise, yet we need *not rest* the matter here. For is it not a *truth indelibly impressed* on the experience and observa-

tion of all ages, that piety, in its divinely enlightening and directive principles, its sanctifying grace, its holy affections, its pure morality, its spiritual and exalted enjoyments, supplies us with influences which operate as so many conservative principles to the health of the mentul as well as the corporal constitution of man; and thus it cannot but tend to the prolongation of human life. The restraints, too, which it throws over us against the too eager pursuit of the affairs of this world, are, no doubt, designed to guard us against that oppressive load of perplexity, anxiety, and disappointment, usually attendant on a life of unrestrained worldly ambition and interprise, and which in multitudes of instances, bring down their votaries to a premature grave. The sustaining influence, and abounding consolation also, which it imparts, and the cheering and well-grounded hopes which it cherishes, with regard to glory and blessedness hereafter, under all the inevitable afflictions and trials of life, are eminently calculated to soothe the mind and uphold it under all the cares which are more or less incident to our present condition. Thus whilst it effectually protects us against all unnecessary tear and wear of the constitution, by the excessive perplexities and anxieties attendant on all undue connection with plans of worldly agrandisement, and by the destructive influence of sinful indulgences, by its grace and consolations, it also sustains and soothes the mind under all the inevitable ills of the present world, and thus cannot but exert an important influence favorable to the duration of human life. Besides all this, the early and decided piety, and the due discharge of the filial duties which children owe to their parents, and the peace and happiness which may naturally be expected generally to flow from such a system of training, cannot but free the minds of parents from much of that anxiety which they cannot fail more or less to feel in reference to their children. Nor is it the burden of care and anxiety alone which is thus either alleviated or taken away; there is the joy which the parental heart cannot but feel as it surveys the holy and happy circle around it, or ventures to look forward into the future, and pictures each one, as they rise into mature years, verging off into some new path of usefulness and happiness, as Providence may allot to them, in "serving their generation," and thinks of the expanding influence which they may thus have in sustaining the cause of the Redeemer in the world; or ventures to look forward to the closing scene of all, and to their happy meeting in some of the mansions of glory in heaven. As these are circumstances which seem eminently calculated to free the parent's heart from care, and to fill it with exalted joy, so they cannot but have a favorable influence on their health, and therefore on the prolongation of their life. The undutifulness and impiety of a child has broken many a parent's heart, shortened their days, and

last brought down their grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. But, in the case before us, there is nothing of all this. Piety, in all the maturity and fruitfulness of age, on the one hand, and in all the lovliness and freshness of childhood and youth on the other, throws its hallowing and cheering influence over all, so that their days pass "as the days of heaven upon the earth." and when death comes and breaks up the happy circle, parent and child can part in peace and joy, and in the delightful assurance of soon meeting again in a far happier home, in a mansion into which sin and death can never enter, and in which the joys and bliss of all will be complete and without end, for it is in heaven.

In closing this important subject, permit me, earnestly and affectionately to remind parents of the duty which they owe to their children. It is on you my dear hearers, that God has laid the injunction, "to lay up his words in your heart and soul, and to bind them for a sign upon your hand, and to have them as frontlets between your eyes, and to teach them your children." This clearly defines what is your great duty in reference to the training of your offspring. It is on you that God has laid it, and you cannot neglect it, or attempt to transfer it to others, without calling in question his wisdom and setting aside his authority; and this can never be done, in reference to any matter, without bringing along with it the most fearful consequences. It is doubtless a true saying, that no other person can duly fill a parent's place: and it is no less true that no other person can supply a parent's instructions, and a parent's example. However good these may be in others, yet they have not the frequency nor the moulding influence of parental intercourse; nor are they aided by the attractions of a father's and a mother's love, entreaties and prayers—ingredients in moral influence, the want of which nothing else can supply. And yet the observant mind cannot fail to see that the tendency of the *fashionable* education of the age is to keep "the words of God" as far as possible from the youthful mind, and to bring it, in all its early impressions and associations, under the influence of a system in which neither God nor eternity finds a place, and whose chief object is to secularize the human heart, and to bound its hopes, and fears, and aims, within the narrow span of life, and leave it wholly unprepared for eternity. But, though we thus speak, we are far from being opposed to a due measure of attention to those acquirements in science, or literature, or the arts, which are regarded as necessary accomplishments in modern society; it is only the giving of the *chief place* to these, instead of "the words of God," in the training of the young, that we may fear and deprecate. Parents, also, too often forget their character as divinely appointed teachers of their children in "the words of God," and to wish to transfer all the religious *instruction which they* receive, the pulpit and

the Sabbath-school. It is an abuse of these, however, to suppose that they were ever intended to set aside the daily influence of parental example and instruction, at the family altar, in the family circle, and by the way-side. However excellent these institutions may be, yet they never can make up for the want of these ; and the right view for parents to take of them is, that they are only important helps to aid them in their appropriate duties, and to carry out their instructions, it may be, into a wider range in divine truth, than can usually be taken in the family circle. Early impressions and associations are proverbially the most lasting, and generally the most fondly cherished ; and on you, Christian parents, devolves the high duty of having those of your children all on the side of piety here, and calculated to lead them to heaven hereafter. And, if you would have them to be of this character, "the words of God" must be laid up in your heart and soul, and be the man of your counsel in all things. Everything must be excluded from your parental example and family arrangements, which is calculated to make an unfavorable impression in regard to religion on the tender minds of your children ; whilst all your instruction and example should be such as are calculated to make indelible impressions on their hearts of the necessity the excellence, and the loveliness of piety. In addition t the daily prayers and praises which you offer up around th family altar, they may occasionally at least be taken wi you into your closet, that they may there witness the po ings out and wreslings of your heart with God for the To the sanctuary, too, on the Sabbath, they should early regularly be brought, and the deepest reverence and att tion be inculcated upon them. They should also be m acquainted with their lost and undone condition by nat and with the plan of salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ, with the necessity of an early surrender of themselves him, and of a life of devotedness to his service. Early, should they be taught to look to heaven as their home, to be continually preparing for it, as the place alone wh your best and most ardent wishes for them can be fully r ized. Christian fathers and mothers! Oh, be entrea then, thus to train up your offspring in the words and w of God, that they may be a seed to serve him here, and w you to be united in the bonds of his covenant, that, w called to part in death, the sorrows of the trying scene be mitigated, or lost amid the splendors of the hope of m ing, ere long, a family redeemed in heaven. Happy fa lies! who are thus trained. Happy church that posse them!—they are the never-failing nurses of her prosper Happy parents! who can thus part with them in de And glorious and blissful, beyond the power of present cription, will be their happy lot when they meet and d for ever around the throne of God and the Lamb.

Such are the important and delightful bearings of the subject on the well-being of families themselves. But these are not the only aspects in which we ought to view it. There are others, most intimately connected with the preservation and extension of genuine piety in the world, which should not be overlooked. The low state of piety which, with few exceptions, prevails in our churches, and the open and restless movements of the abettors of the various systems of soul-destroying error which abound, particularly when viewed in connection with the fulfilment of some of those great Scripture prophesies, whose day seems near at hand, are calculated to awaken the deepest interest in the proper training of the children of the church, that they may be prepared for the trials which seem to await them, and for successfully sustaining the cause of Christ against the combined and furious assaults of the confederated powers of infidelity and antichrist, and for carrying it onward to the conquest of the world. Great and glorious struggles for the truth, which may involve the loss of all things in this world for Christ, we fear are in the path of the church; struggles, which nothing but deep-seated and noble-minded piety that will raise the heart above all the low calculations of mere worldly wisdom, and enable it fearlessly to meet whatever shock may come on it in the future conflicts for the faith, and to be careful for nothing, so be that Christ may be magnified in them, whether it be by life or by death, can enable them to carry on. And where can we so appropriately look for the seeds and nurslings of that piety, as in the faithful, pure, elevated and impressive teachings and examples of the Christian family circle? There—and there alone—under God, we feel persuaded, is the moulding cast to be given to the immortal minds that are destined to sustain the conflicts, and to gain the holy triumphs of the coming age. Would you, then, my dear hearers, have your sons men of renown in the future armies of the Lord God of Israel, and rising superior to all the seductions of error, and all the frowns and terrors—it may be—of a blood-stained persecution, study to bring them, from their earliest days, under the sanctifying and heavenly influence of the "words of God." And then when you yourselves rest from your labors, and your happy spirits wing their way from this world of conflict to that where all is peace and the fullness of joy forever, you will be able to carry with you the glad tidings to the spirits who are already there, that you have left behind you those who will carry on the conflict with the enemies of truth and holiness, and will never give over till the earth is filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and all the tribes and kindreds of men shall be blessed in him, and the adoring shout of a redeemed world shall crown him Lord of all. Better and brighter far will be the *glory of training up children* who will thus be renowned in *the future triumphs of* Divine grace, than of being the pa-

rents of those who may wield sceptres, or be celebrated as the heroes of the world. Aim, then, at this, in all you teach, and wish, and pray for your children, that in them you may bless generations yet unborn, while they themselves shall follow on, to be with you, partakers in the joy and glory of the family in heaven.

THE DEVIL A DECEIVER.—BY THE EDITOR.

"There is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it,"—JOHN 8: 44.

As God is the essence and embodiment of all truth, so the Devil is the personification and mouth-piece of all falsehood. The first conception of sin in the towering mind of that fallen archangel, was a horrible though yet unuttered falsehood; all the sin in the universe is but the growth and development of that original untruth. As he began his career of rebellion and abandonment in heaven, with a secretly cherished falsehood, so has it been the drift of all his plans and doings since, openly to defend and maintain that falsehood against God and the universe. His character is the essence and expression of all falsehood; his power to do evil is the power of falsehood; he rules in hell and maintains himself on earth by falsehood; his agency, from first to last, is one vast and diabolical system of deception and lying: all sin is the result of a lie—hell itself is the fruit of a lie.

The Devil gained his entrance into this world by means o deception and falsehood. The part he acted in the garde was the part of subtility and lying. "Ye shall not surel die," was the malicious and monstrous lie with which t "serpent" finally triumphed over man. And he has nev spoken to man since, except to utter a new lie or to repe an old one. Truly, as John affirms, "There is no truth him. When he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own; he is a liar and the father of it." It is amazing what a b and practiced liar he has become. And more amazing s that men will be made his willing dupes, will *believe* his which he has been repeating over and over ever since fall, and which have been proved to be such by the obse tion and experience of the world for nearly six thou years. Not a word that he ever addressed to men spoken in good faith; not a part that he ever acted on was sincere and real; not a promise that he ever made t guile men's reason or excite their hopes, has he kept end, his one business, is to deceive and cheat the soul virtue and heaven; and yet, beings calling themselves r al, and when their all is at stake, believe and practice, *and real*, what he tells them.

Thus he promises men this world and the glory and riches, and pleasures of it, if they will but fall down and worship him. Is the world *his* to give? Are these things at his disposal? The promise is a lie, and he never means to keep it; and cannot perform it if he would. He promises sinners impunity in transgression, happiness in sin, hope in death, and heaven beyond, live as they will. But does his promise falsify God's awful word: "Be sure your sin will find you out;" "the end thereof is destruction?" Will he step in between God and the soul he has ruined, and shield him in the day of calamity? He means no such thing. He knows that he has spoken lies, and that they will eternally undo those who take refuge in them; and that is what he wants. His object is to deceive men as to the guilt and consequences of sin.

He whispers in the ears of the young: "Delay religion for the present: time enough yet · a convenient season will come by and by: this haste and great ado about religion are needless: years hence, in old age, in a time of sickness, on your death-bed, you can repent just as well as now, and God will not refuse your repentance even at the last moment." Oh! into how many ears has this syren song been sung, to lull men's fears and prevail on them to put off the great concerns of eternity till he has them in his power. Was there a greater untruth ever uttered? And does not the Devil know it? Is it not a wanton and malicious device to gain his dreadful end? Has he not eternally ruined millions of souls by this very deception?

To another, the Devil says: "The gospel is well enough for the vicious, the profane, the lewd, the openly irreligious and wicked; but you are honest and moral: you respect religion and observe its requirements; and what more is necessary? Your heart is not so bad: this regeneration that some talk about is not essential; do as well as you can, and trust God for the rest." And thus he applies the unction of flattery to men's consciences, and fills them with pride and self-righteousness. But in all this he only acts out his true character. He can counterfeit religion as readily as he can disguise sin: he has as many ways and means to induce men to trust in a false experience, as he has to lead them to disbelieve or neglect religion entirely. Probably as many are ruined by being deceived as to what religion is, and as to their personal experience of it, as by unbelief and neglect of it. The Devil takes advantage of the tendencies of the human heart, and when he can no longer keep the sinner away from religion, he will, if possible, substitute "another gospel" and make him satisfied with it.

Thus all the fair words and spurious hopes by which he *allures men to sin,* and retains them in his service, and palms *off upon them* a worthless experience, are cheats and lies; *there is nothing* true and real in them. The Devil has no

authority to hold out such inducements—no power or will make them good. They deceive men and are meant to c ceive them; and under the specious promise of good, or i punity, make sure the damnation of the soul.

The Devil deceives men as to the real value of this world when once is secured, as well as in reference to impunity in sin. Men's experier in the possession of wealth, power, rank, honor, pleasure, is a sad co mentary on the doctrine which they have been taught to believe, and expectations to cherish. The sigh of disappointment, wrung even fr such, and their cry of "Vanity, all is vanity!" shows the extent of t deception which has been practiced upon them. A long life of bitter perience is scarcely sufficient to correct our first impressions of the va of this world—make us see and confess, to our own hearts, that it is af all empty and vain. Why, what a fair and beautiful thing is human li as the Deceiver paints it on the unpractised vision of the youthful min It is a perfect Paradise—a scene of enchantment. But alas! how the lusion vanishes, as we come to encounter the stern realities of life. H one fondly-cherished hope after another fades and perishes, till all are g —nothing more remains—and life without God is found to be an evil a a weariness, and the earth a desert with no satisfying good. Whitl have fled the pleasures of youth that once were so alluring, and for which were so willing to let "Christ and heaven go?" What have become of stores of wealth, the barns of plenty, the abundant experience of good, th were promised us in manhood? Whence are to come the mellow fruit a the quiet blessings of old age? We reach at length the brink of the gra and looking back over the waste of years, wonder if that be the life which c youthful fancy set out in colors so bright and fascinating.

And it is only by means of deception—making "the worse appear the b ter reason"—holding out at every step the most alluring hopes, and disgu ing the odious character of sin, and hiding from view its certain and fatal c sequences, that the Devil succeeds in ruining so many souls.

Sin itself is a monstrous lie; there is no truth in it; it is "the doctrine devils." It is a lie against the being and every perfection of God; against the laws of rectitude and of nature, as well as grace: it is a lie against peace and happiness of the soul, and the universal good. The sinner is ma the willing dupe and victim of a malicious lie from first to last. How mou ful the spectacle! All his hopes will perish and his works be destroyed, they are false. Death to him will be "a melancholy day," for it will rev the nature and extent of his deception. And his eternity will be embitte by the taunts and torments of the infinitely odious and lying deceiver.

If the Devil is such a deceiver why will men trust him? How can they tr his word? How be duped by his devices? since he has done nothing but ceive and ruin men ever since he gained entrance into the world: why sho he not be hated and detested as such a character deserves to be?

How can men serve such a master? All his power is usurped. His cha acter comprehends all meanness and vileness and infamy. His service is hard one—his reward, disappointment, misery, eternal death! He cherie towards us not one kind feeling: he desires to make us as miserable as h self; and no means are spared to accomplish it. To serve him is to ensla our souls, and gratify his fiendish pleasure, and make our destruction sure.

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SERMON DX.

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RELIGION IN BUSINESS.

"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord."—ROMANS 12 : 11

THE revival of business is now the common topic of conversation with business men. There is no more complaining of "a dull season," of "nothing doing;" but every sort of business is active, and there is promise of a season of unusual prosperity. For one, I am glad of it. As a Christian minister, I rejoice in it; for dull times in business are apt to be dull times in everything. Though in a season of general distress, many may turn their thoughts to religion and eternal things, yet it is in a time of general prosperity that the cause of Christ, as a whole, moves forward. Then it is that men build churches, schools, and colleges, plant missions, send forth evangelists, distribute freely the Word of God, in short, push forward with vigor all the enterprises of benevolence. The opening of a railroad through a certain county in Massachusetts wiped off some half-a-dozen churches from the list of beneficiaries of the Home Missionary Society. It revived business; it brought trade and money to the doors of the people, and thus gave them the means of supporting the institutions of the gospel. The same process is going forward in other States, both North and West. Religion has an interest in the railroad, the canal, the factory, the mine, the ship, the steamboat, the machine, the plow, the anvil, and the loom. Where the fruits of industry and commerce most abound, there religion may look for her largest tribute; as also, in turn, where religion is best sustained there the arts and occupations of civilized life are most flourishing. Therefore, let not Christians look upon the reviving of business as of course a hindrance to the revival of religion, nor feel that nothing can be done to revive religion in a busy sea-

son. Let them not set religion in opposition to all the temporal interests of men; neither let them separate their own business from their religion, and attempt to carry each forward at intervals only, and distinct from the other. While we congratulate our fellow-citizens on the revival of business, let us turn their thoughts to the higher blessing of the reviving of religion; making the return of temporal prosperity the occasion of gratitude to God and of renewed activity in his service. In so doing, we shall carry out the spirit of the apostolic precept in our text.

I am aware that some understand by "business" here, *the work of Christ*—referring the exhortation to "religious activity," rather than to "the active performance of our several vocations." The word translated "business" means properly, *haste, zeal, activity, diligence;* and hence it comes very naturally to denote *industry*, labor. The meaning of the apostle may then be expressed as follows: As to diligence, activity, labor, do not be remiss or slothful—do not grow weary or indolent. Thus taken, it is a *general* precept, corresponding with that given in Ecclesiastes, 9: 10, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." In this view of the text, we may say with Dr. Chalmers, "Whether we retain the word business or render it into any other of the relative terms, there is no mistaking the sense of this first clause, which is not to be slothful but diligent; and that whatever the business may be, if an expedient and a lawful one. The question whether it be a sacred or secular employment which is here referred to, will not embarrass him whose honest aim is to leaven with the spirit of the gospel every hour of his life, and every work which he puts his hand to. The man who studies to observe 'all things whatsoever' Christ hath commanded him, will still feel himself religiously employed when following the precept—'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.' He will see no difficulty in making the advice here given to be of universal application, who aspires to a conformity with the sayings—'Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God;' 'Whatsoever ye do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.'"

We may, therefore, apply the text, at least in its spirit, to secular business. Not only in the work of the ministry, not only in labors of brotherly love, or of benevolence towards mankind, but in the daily vocations of life, in our every-day business, we are to be "not slothful" but diligent.

In order to a full development of this idea, I remark

1. The Christian religion favors activity and diligence in business. In this remark it is implied, of course, that the business is in itself lawful; not lawful merely according to the statute-book of the state or code of commerce, but lawful according to the great moral law of benevolence which extends *to all the* conduct and relations of life.

A business whose direct tendency is to injure the community in property, health, or morals, like the sale of intoxicating drinks, though it may be licensed by the civil authority, is in violation of the law of love, and is, therefore, an *unlawful* business. There is no commendation of such business in the Word of God; no exhortation to faithfulness and diligence therein; but, on the contrary, the curse of God is upon it and its gains. "Wo to him that giveth his neighbor drink, that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken.....the cup of the Lord's right hand shall be turned to thee, and shameful spewing shall be on thy glory." The very house built by such gains is accursed. "For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it; wo to him that buildeth a town with blood, and establisheth a city by iniquity!" Any business which tends to injure mankind is unlawful, and is disallowed of God. But whatever business is of a useful tendency, whatever contributes in any way to the well-being of mankind—physically, intellectually, socially, or morally—that it is not only lawful for us to engage in, but being engaged in it, we are commanded to follow it with diligence. The scriptural rule is, that every man shall have some useful occupation, and that he shall be industrious in his calling.

Paul, in his letters to the Thessalonians, says: "We beseech you, brethren, that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing." And again: "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort, by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread." He then refers to his own example. Though he might have called upon them to support him while he was laboring for their good, yet, for example's sake, he "did not eat any man's bread for naught, but wrought with labor and travail night and day, that he might not be chargeable to any." The Bible nowhere tolerates laziness. Both the Old Testament and the New abound in exhortations to diligence. The book of proverbs is a manual of industry. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise." "The soul of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat." "He that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster." "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men." Christ condemns sloth in his own service, as in the sentence of the wicked and slothful servant in the parable of the talents: He was ever active in doing good, and doubtless before entering on his public

ministry, was industrious in his sphere as the carpenter's son. Paul labored at his trade of tent-making while in Ephesus, ministering to his necessities with his own hands; and he exhorts the Ephesians to labor, working with their own hands, in some good and useful occupation.

Thus much for the teachings of Scripture upon this point. Idleness is utterly discountenanced. It is condemned as a sin. The Christian religion enjoins industry and diligence in our secular concerns.

What Christianity thus enjoins by positive precept, it favors also by its influence, direct or indirect, in various ways. On this point, it has been well observed, that religion "draws off the mind from those pleasures and pursuits which generate and promote indolence." Vain, frivolous, and vicious amusements are not only forbidden by the spirit and precepts of the gospel, but are superseded by those higher occupations with which it fills the mind. The pursuits of idleness,—if that be not a contradiction in terms,—are foreign to the temper of the Christian. He has no relish for them. He can take no satisfaction in idling away his time. One can hardly conceive of such a character as a Christian loafer,—a devout, God-fearing idler. One of the first fruits of the gospel among a people who have been living in idleness and wantonness, is industry. When once a man realizes that he is immortal, he is no longer content to live like a beast; he forsakes the filthy hut for the neat cottage; he gives up his roving, reckless manner of life for the quiet occupations of husbandry, or for some mechanic art, or for the more active pursuits of trade and commerce. The thought that he is to live hereafter, leads him to set a higher value on the present life. He no longer walks in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revelings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries. The idler, the spendthrift, the prodigal, is transformed into a sober and industrious man, through the power of the gospel. Those who have watched the progress of civilization in connection with missionary labor at the Sandwich Islands, or among our own aborigines, will need no further argument or illustration on this point. The progress of Christianity is the progress of man in physical comfort and social refinement. The gospel makes the desert bloom, and covers the wilderness with gladness and plenty.

Again: the Christian religion by holding forth the great idea of the renovation of the world, demands of all who embrace it, the active improvement of time. The Christian religion contemplates man in a state of degradation; the world in ruins. Its office is to bring man out of that state; to build up those ruins. And in order to this, the whole fabric of society must be penetrated by its influence, and if need be, molded anew. Not only barbarism, but civilization itself must be Christianized. The masses must be reached; the poor must

be clothed and fed, and comforted; the ignorant must be instructed, the vicious restrained: political economy, civil government, every social institution must be brought under the control of the law of love. Christianity does not have to do merely with the souls of men; with their spiritual interests alone. It cares for these first and most of all, but it cares for men's bodies also—for their temporal well-being. It seeks to do away with poverty, with oppression, with wrong, with all unjust and unnatural distinctions, with every social and moral evil, from the face of the earth. And he who embraces Christianity finds himself enlisted for life in that work. It is a great work. To do his part of it, every Christian must be diligent in his calling, that so far as that contributes to the improvement and happiness of mankind, he may do good therein; he must be diligent in business, that he may thus gain the means of usefulness in other modes; he must be diligent in business, that he may gain time for engaging directly in acts of benevolence. Jesus felt that he had a work to do. "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day." "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" So the Christian feels that he has a work to do for Christ and for the world, which calls upon him to be diligent in all things—to lead a life of laborious and unceasing activity.

This requirement reaches Christians of all classes and in all circumstances. The pious female dispenses comfort and happiness to her household; but she does not limit her affections or her zeal by the circle of home. Dorcas-like, she plies her needle upon garments for the poor, or she goes forth on errands of sympathy and relief, to the dwellings of the needy and the sorrowing; and to gain time for these labors, she is diligent in her own affairs. Both in the daily routine of household duties, and in the various offices of kindness to others, the desire to be useful and to honor Christ in her appointed sphere, quickens every movement, graces every labor, lightens every care.

Again, the Christian religion promotes industry, by impressing the mind with a deep conviction of the value of time. The Christian, at the moment of conversion, starts with this feeling: I have wasted thus much of life; I have lost years on years of precious time; and now I must go to work to redeem it. The time past of my life must suffice for worldliness, self-seeking, folly, sin; I now have something to live for, and I must not live any longer to myself—it is high time to awake out of sleep.

With this feeling he becomes conscientious in the use of time. He has none to waste; he takes the time needed for sleep as a matter of duty; he takes the time necessary for relaxation, for social visiting and enjoyment, for the amenities of life as a matter of principal, that he may be refreshed, and have health

and vigor for life's great work. But he does not seek amusement, or lie idle, for want of something to do, or because he feels that he has time to spare. "Time is money," to the man of business: to the Christian it is more—it is growth in holiness; it is works of benevolence; it is the salvation of souls; it is the conquest of the world, for Christ; it is an immortal crown. He who attaches such a value to time can never be remiss, can never be idle.

But it may be said that though the Christian religion in these ways commends and favors industry, it yet interferes with the business of life, by the frequency of religious observances, by drawing men away from business to religious meetings, and by appropriating one-seventh part of time to that use alone.

But if we compare the Christian religion in this respect with any other, or with irreligion, we shall see that the objection has no force. If you will take the pains to reckon up the number of festivals and other religious days, among the Greeks and Romans, days on which men were drawn aside from the ordinary pursuits of life, by religious observances, you will find, I think, that more than half the year was thus appropriated. The same is true of some pagan nations, to this day. And in Roman Catholic countries, where Christianity is corrupted till it is little more than a baptized paganism, you will find perhaps two-thirds of the year, or four days out of six, appropriated to religious ceremonies. When Atheism had sway in France, it was not much better; the fete took the place of the holy-day, and the decade of the Sabbath. The Jewish system, though of Divine origin, demanded a much larger proportion of time for religious observances than the Christian. In this respect, therefore, the world has gained greatly by the introduction of Christianity, and must gain wherever a pure Christianity prevails. The reason of this is, that Judaism, Romanism, and Paganism, are all alike ritual, ceremonial systems. Under those systems, men are to be saved by rites and ceremonies, and so the more of them the better. But Christianity is a spiritual system; men are saved under it by faith and holy living. It has but one sacred day—the Sabbath, and that not ceremonially, but morally sacred. All other observances are voluntary.

Now, as to the effect of the Sabbath on industry, let facts speak. These show us that both man and beast need this stated season of rest, and can do more work with it in six days, than without it in seven. It is a benevolent and an economical provision. Where the Sabbath is observed, individuals, the community, the nation, are more prosperous and thrifty than where it is not observed. The Sabbath strengthens good habits. It does not, when religiously observed, encourage idleness and vice, or leave any of those demoralizing influences that follow in the train of a pagan festival. The Sabbath is the great

regulator of human industry; the balance-wheel in a well ordered political economy. Under every aspect, then, the Christian religion is found to favor industry. By precept, by motives and influences, direct and indirect, and by its own positive institutions.

In accordance with this, was the greeting of the Apostle John to the beloved Gaius. "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." So far from regarding temporal prosperity as necessarily adverse to religion, he wished that his friend might be as prosperous in his temporal affairs and in bodily health, as he was in his soul.

But while religion thus favors industry, it would infuse into all the business of life the leaven of piety. Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. The fervor here spoken of is not necessarily a religious, or devotional fervor, but an earnestness such as an ardent mind brings to any object upon which it is intent. Do not be slothful, but warmly engaged, fervid, active in what is before you. Do the business of the hour, whatever it may be, in serious earnest, and that as a part of the great work of life. "Let each hour be busily filled up with its own proper empl yment," and that in subordination to the will of the master whom you serve. Let all the business of life be conducted as a part of your Christian duty, not as distinct from it; but in the spirit of Christianity, in obedience to the commands of God; for the glory of your Saviour; for the good of mankind. This comprehensive precept is given in other forms. "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God." "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters, according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye-service as men pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart." ..... "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not to men." "Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." That is the rule of the Christian life. To some it may seem hard to be understood, and almost impossible to be obeyed. Yet nothiug can be plainer, for nothing is more common among men, than to have some one governing motive, some ruling purpose, running through all their conduct, shaping all their plans, and influencing all their actions,

The father toils year after year to provide for his family; perhaps goes to some distant region, or foreign land, and there amid hardships and privations, digs and delves, or buys and sells, that he may lay up something for the comfort of the dear ones at home. They are not momently in his thoughts; his mind is occupied with business, and he carries on the details of business just as other men. Yet there is in his soul a deep

spring of action unknown to the youthful adventurer, who labors at his side. When prospered, he rejoices for their sakes who are far away; when unsuccessful, his sorrow is deepened on their account: when weary and almost disheartened he thinks of them, and his spirits rally and his strength returns. Thus is he ever acting, not mechanically nor from impulse, but from one fixed motive, a motive which does not lie upon the surface, but is deeper and stronger even than the love of gain.

Another, under *that* sordid motive, will transmute the very virtues of social life into ministers of avarice.

A third, moved by a more generous passion, will make every plan and action of his life subordinate to its gratification. Thus the hero of romance, and often the hero of real life, who for lack of fortune or fame, is denied the hand of her he loves, will traverse seas and continents, make any sacrifice, meet any danger, undergo any privation, perform prodigies of labor or valor, and even hazard life itself, to secure his end. In these and a thousand other instances, men know what it is to act under one ruling motive, which gives color and direction to all that they do, even when it is not apparent to others, and even at times when they themselves are not distinctly conscious of it. So should it be with the Christian; the one grand absorbing object of his life should be to serve the Lord. With a view to this, not his religious exercises merely, but his daily business should be conducted. He should leaven that with the spirit of the gospel.

How this is done may be best learned by illustration. A minister goes into his study in a prayerful spirit, to prepare a discourse for the pulpit. His great desire is to bring the Word of God before the minds of his hearers with distinctness and power. In order to get at the full meaning and spirit of his chosen text, he studies it critically in the original tongues. Wishing to avail himself of the help of German scholarship and criticism, he studies also the German language. If, while he is thus engaged, a friend should enter his study and ask him why he is studying German, he might answer truly, "to save souls." But how so? Does he expect to preach in German? No. But by consulting the Biblical scholars and grammarians of a country pre-eminent in Biblical criticism, he hopes to gain a clearer insight into the meaning of his text, and thus to exhibit more clearly and convincingly the truth as it is in Jesus. A minister may be intent upon the salvation of souls, while turning over the leaves of a Greek or German lexicon.

The young student who has devoted himself in heart to missionary work, in studying each lesson during his long preparatory course, is doing what he can for the glory of Christ and the salvation of the heathen. He may not reflect that each lesson is designed to fit him for his chosen work; other local and temporary influences may contribute to make

studious; but after all, the main-spring of his every-day diligence in study, is the work which he has in view at the close of his course.

The merchant whose mind is intent on the advancement of Christ's kingdom is not merely selling cotton, cloth, and calico, all the day long, but in doing that—if that is his business—besides providing for his own support and that of his family, giving employment to others, and contributing to the general welfare of society, he is also sustaining a church, supporting a missionary or a colporteur, founding a college, doing whatever the avails of that business shall do to promote Christ's kingdom.

A compositor or a pressman in the Bible-house may work merely for his daily bread; and it may be to him a matter of indifference whether he prints the Bible or Paine's age of Reason. But if he is living for Christ, it will be a matter of great satisfaction to him, that, while laboring for his daily bread, he is also contributing to multiply copies of the Word of God. And in like manner, any lawful and useful occupation may be pursued as a religious duty, and with constant reference to the glory of God, though it may be simply mechanical and may terminate wholly in physical effects.

A minister calling early one morning on a parishioner, a currier by trade, the latter apologized for being in his working dress. "May I be found so," replied the minister, "when the Master shall come for me." "What!" exclaimed the other, "in such a filthy dress?" "When Christ comes," rejoined the pastor, "may I be found about my business."

In view of the subject, I remark: 1. That the Christian who makes his attention to business a pretext for inattention to the duties of religion, takes a wrong view both of business and religion, and sets against each other, things that were meant to be in harmony. True, indeed, it is, sadly true, that worldly employments often, perhaps commonly, draw off the mind from God. Sometimes this is owing to the nature of the employment; but it is often the case where the business is lawful, because it is looked upon as a thing distinct from the service of God, a sort of necessary bondage to the world, or a necessary temptation and discipline. And even those who aim to *do* business on Christian principles, do not always regard *the doing* of business as itself a duty to be performed in its own time and place, for the glory of God, as truly as the duty of prayer. "The right discharge of our duties in the various employments of life, is to be regarded as serving God. He has arranged the order of things in this life to promote industry; he has made industry essential to happiness and success. He has *required* that all our employments should be conducted with reference to his will and to his honor." He who so conducts his business will not find it a hindrance to piety, and will

be relieved of the painful strife between the claims of business and the claims of God.

2. In a time of general prosperity, we should seek the reviving of religion. It is a common saying, and a more common feeling, that nothing can be done for reviving religion in a *busy* season. Is this so? Has God subjected us to temporal necessities and laws which conflict with our spiritual welfare? The farmer, at certain seasons, must be engaged in husbanding his crops; is this incompatible with the due performance of religious duties? Is there any such necessary conflict between the temporal and the spiritual? Viewing the busy season as a temptation, you should resolve that you will not be drawn off from God. But why not regard your increasing prosperity with gratitude, as sent from God, and make it a new incentive to activity in his service? Do not bargain with conscience to serve the world so hard, and so long, with the promise of serving God when you shall have nothing else to do. Let others see that, in being diligent in business, you are working for God. Do not conduct your business on selfish principles; and while you are making money, give, *give*, GIVE, as God prospers you.

3. Men of the world may understand what we mean, when we call upon them to give up the world and become Christians. We do not ask them to give up their business, unless that business is an immoral and unlawful one. We do not ask them to be any less industrious and thrifty. But we show them how they may subbordinate their business to a higher end; and instead of toiling for self and pelf, may labor for an object that shall last for ever. We show them how they may ennoble life, and enjoy it, and link it to heaven besides. What is it to make money? For whom do you make it? What shall it profit you to gain the whole world, and lose your own soul? Oh, live to to do good! live for God!—then shall you live forever, and when you are gone hence, your works shall follow you in lines of fadeless glory to the skies.

SERMON DXI.

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THIS LIFE MAN'S SEASON OF PROBATION FOR ETERNITY.

"For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done whether it be good or bad."—2. Cor. 5 : 10.

THIS life is man's season of probation for eternity. That this doctaine is taught by the apostle in my text is evident. He uses the term "in the body," to signify continuence in the present life. He says; "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord." He esteemed it desirable that his present life should terminate, because then he should enter heaven to enjoy the beatific presence of Christ. But he believed that to be prepared for that enjoyment, he must continue to be faithful in his sacred calling. "Wherefore," he says, "we labor, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him." He then expresses the same sentiment in a general proposition: "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." All must appear before Christ, to be judged; and those who shall have done good, or obeyed the Gospel in their life-time, will be accepted; but those who shall have done evil, or disobeyed the Gospel in their lifetime, will he condemned. An additional evidence that the apostle meant here to teach that this life is man's season of probation for eternity, is given in the words which he subjoined, "Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." That this life is a season of probation for eternity, is confirmed by the following considerations:—

1. Man's *nature* is adapted to such a state of probation. He is a moral agent. He is capable of distinguishing between right and wrong, and of choosing or refusing. When the law

of God is clearly exhibited to the mind of man, his conscienc approves of it, and he is convinced that he ought to obey i When he transgresses it he is conscious that he does wron that he renders himself blame-worthy, and that he ought have rendered obedience. Or when the Gospel is intelligib presented to him, he cannot do otherwise than assent to it, being worthy of acceptation. He is conscious that he ought accede to its terms, and gratefully accept the great salvati Man has not only ability to act as a moral agent, but he is susce ible of retribution. He is a proper subject for reward or p ishment. He is conscious that he ought not to be accep and rewarded unless he does right; and that he deserves to condemned and punished when he commits sin.

Man's nature, therefore, is adapted to a state of probati He has ability and capacity to do right, and receive rewa or to do wrong, and receive punishment. Since, moreo man is an immortal being, he is by nature adapted to be this life a probitioner for eternity. According to the char ter which he forms here, whether holy or sinful, he will be ted either for a state of happiness or misery in eternity.

II. Man's *condition* in this life is adapted to a state of p bation for eternity.

He has opportunity to do good or to do evil. He may exe cise in his heart, and manifest in his life, benevolence or s fishness, love or hatred, faith or unbelief, piety or impiet obedience to God or rebellion against him. He not only ha as before stated, ability to distinguish between right an wrong, and a consciousness that he ought to obey the law God, and accede to the terms of the Gospel; but such is th condition in which he is placed that he is of necessity con stantly deciding the question whether he will obey or disobey accede or refuse. I now speak of the condition of man whil he has a knowledge of the Scriptures. He knows what hi duty is to God, his fellow-man, and himself. Motives are pre sented to induce him to do his duty. At the same time hi heart is tried by temptations. In this condition he cannot sus pend his moral agency. He must voluntarily conform to the rule of moral rectitude, or voluntarily act in violation of it. If he is a sinner he must either repent, or persist in transgres sion; he must obey the Gospel in the exercise of faith, or con tinue in unbelief; he must yield to the authority and espouse the cause of Christ, and stand with him or continue to resist his authority and oppose his cause. Thus, every person upon whom the light of revelation shines, is forming a moral character, either holy or sinful: is laying up a treasure either of heaven ly blessedness with the saints in light, or of wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. Nor are those only who have the Scriptures in a condition which is adapted to a probationary state: "for," says the ap-

ostle, "when the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law are a law unto themselves; who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another." Accordingly moral obligation rests upon the pagan world, and they are constantly forming a character as probationers for eternity.

III. The comparisons by which the scriptures represent this life, plainly teach that it is a season of probation for eternity. this life is compared to seed time. "Be not deceived," says the apostle, "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." In this life men sow their different kinds of seed. Some sow to the flesh. They occupy their time and talents in gratifying the carnal mind. They are caterers to the selfishness, pride, covetousness, or licentiousness of their own hearts. Their harvest time will come; and as they have sowed to the flesh, they will of the flesh reap corruption. Their portion will be the wages of sin—the second death. Others sow to the Spirit. They occupy their time and talents according to the dictates and under the influence of the spirit of grace. They too will have a harvest. They will of the spirit reap life everlasting. As during the appropriate season the seed is sown, springs up, and is matured for the harvest, so, during this life, man forms his character as a probationer for the final judgment,—that harvest which will be at the end of the world, and the consequence of which will be the retributions of eternity.

Of similar import are the parables of the ten virgins and that of the talents. When the virgins were called to go out to meet the bridegroom, the wise having taken oil in their vessels were in readiness "when at midnight there was a cry made, behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." Whereas the foolish, having neglected to prepare for the event, when they afterward came, saying Lord, Lord, open unto us," received the reply, "Verily, I say unto you, I know you not." Also the three servants, to one of whom were given five talents, to another two, to another one, were placed on probation; and when their term was expired, their Lord came to reckon with them. The two former had been faithful to their trust, and had gained as much as had been committed to them; to each of whom his Lord said, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the *joy of thy lord." But the other servant,* under pretence that

his Lord was severe and oppressive, went and hid his talent in the earth, and when his Lord came to reckon with him, said, "Lo there thou hast that is thine." To whom his Lord justly replied, "Thou wicked and slothful servant;" and commanded, "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." What instruction did our Saviour design to communicate by these parables, except that mankind are put on trial, and that when the term of probation shall have passed, they will be rewarded or punished according as they shall have been faithful or unfaithful?

Likewise the parable of the rich man and Lazarus was evidently designed to convey the same instruction. The rich man employed his treasures to gratify his pride and voluptuousness; he was hard hearted and unmerciful. He regarded not the cry of poverty and distress. Lazarus was afflicted with poverty and disease, but possessed qualifications for heaven. He died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments. Their lifetime was the season of their probation. They received their retribution in eternity. To the rich man, when he said, "Send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame" Abraham replied, "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things, but now he is comforted and thou art tormented.

Another comparison which is employed in the Scriptures, is that of the Olympic games; in which comparison, the motive presented to man to be faithful, zealous, and persevering in the service of Christ, is likened to that which influenced the competitors in those games. The apostle says, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Again, "Know ye not that they who run a race run all, but one obtaineth the prize? So run that ye may obtain. And every one that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible." But when will the faithful receive that crown? The same apostle informs us when he says, "I have fought a good fight: I have finished my course: I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me in that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." This shows the reason why he said at another time, "We are willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord." He believed in accordance with the Lord's parables which have been considered, that this is the season of man's probation, and that in eternity he will receive his corresponding reward.

IV. The promises, invitations, and warnings to induce men

to accede to the terms of the gospel, imply that this life is a season of probation for eternity. The promises and their conditions are comprised in the following examples: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." "Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." These conditions and promises imply that mankind are sinners, that they have forfeited eternal life, and are justly condemned. Compliance with these conditions is required of men in this life. The promises can be fulfilled only in eternity. The enjoyment of eternal life implies eternal duration. Every person, therefore, to whom the gospel is made known, is in a state of trial in respect to its terms. It is to be decided whether he will accede to them or not; and whether he shall receive remission of sins and eternal life or not. The probation is in this life, and it is for eternity.

The invitations of the gospel imply the same. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." This invitation is tendered to those living in this world. The salvation which men need, and which is offered them in the gospel, is deliverance from the curse of the law, which is eternal punishment. Another invitation is, "Incline your ear and come unto me; hear and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." This is also addressed to men in the present life, while the blessing offered is everlasting. The sum of the invitations of the gospel is, Come now with believing hearts to Christ and accept salvation and eternal life: behold now is the accepted time: behold now is the day of salvation.

The same doctrine is implied in the warnings of Scripture. In the following language addressed to those who had rejected divine mercy, God presents solemn warning to others: "Because I have called and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded: but ye have set at naught my counsel and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh. When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish come upon you; then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me." Is not this a warning to all not to slight the calls, and not to reject the offers of God's mercy, lest remediless woe come upon them? Our Saviour says, "He that believeth not shall be damned;" Again, "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life: but the wrath of God abideth on him." He thus warns sinners of the loss which they will sustain, and the fearful judgment which will come upon them in eternity, if they persist in unbelief. Not to see life, is to be excluded from heaven; to be damned is to be *doomed to hell.*

V. What the Scriptures teach respecting a judgment and future retributions, implies that this life is a season of probation for eternity. It is written, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left." Again, "Because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness." "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." In these passages we are taught that God has appointed a day of judgment: that Christ will be the judge: that all men shall appear before his judgment seat; that every one will be judged according to the things done in his body; and that he will receive retribution according to his deeds, whether they be good or bad. That day is yet to come. We have not yet witnessed it; but all are to have a part in its transactions. We are now forming characters in which we must appear before our Judge, and receive our respective sentences in accordance with them. We are now on trial as the accountable subjects of God's moral government. Life and death are set before us. The narrow way which leads to life and the broad way which leads to destruction are the only alternatives as to our moral course. We are pursuing either the former or the latter; and according to the choice in which we persevere, will be the sentence pronounced upon us by our final Judge. To the righteous the Divine Judge will say, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." They shall dwell in mansions which Christ has prepared for them. They will stand before the throne of God and serve him in his temple. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any hurt; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. But to the wicked the Judge will say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." God will render them indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish. They will be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched. They will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. The smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever. Such are the retributions which the Word of God affirms await *the righteous* and the wicked respectively. Are these retri*butions* experienced in this life? From their nature and dura-

tion it is evident they cannot be. The righteous cannot here dwell in heavenly mansions. It is not their condition here neither to hunger nor thirst or to have all tears wiped from their eyes. They cannot here enjoy eternal life, nor shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

Nor of the wicked is it true, that in this life they go away into everlasting punishment; that they are cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched, nor that the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever.

But if these retributions are not experienced in this life, they will be in eternity. They will be experienced after the judgment day. Previously to that day, that is, in this life, mankind are preparing for them. According to the moral character which we severally form, each of us will enter into eternal life or into eternal punishment.

Some inferences which naturally flow from this doctrine claim attention.

1 Since this life is a season of probation for eternity, the present dispensations of Providence are not judicial retributions. The order of events which the Scriptures describe respecting men as accountable creatures, is, that they first occupy the time given them for their probationary agency; then they are called to judgment before the Divine tribunal; and finally they receive their appropriate reward or punishment. That God's providential dealings with men in this life are not judicial retributions, is evident from the fact that the righteous and the wicked enjoy many blessings in common. God "makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." He opens his liberal hand and dispenses a profusion of blessings in which both classes equally participate. The Psalmist in seeing the condition of some of his wicked cotemporaries, was envious at their prosperity, that they were not in trouble as other men, and had blessings more than heart could wish. In the wicked cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida mighty works were done; and the guilty inhabitants of Capernaum were in point of religious privileges exalted to heaven, while they deserved to be thrust down to hell. Such manifestations of divine goodness to the wicked are not deserved retributions. The wicked deserve not the least of the divine favors. Since the moral conduct of men, while they remain impenitent, is sinful and void of holiness, it is inconsistent to regard the blessings which they enjoy as constituting a reward.

But in what light ought we to view the temporal evils which the wicked suffer? It may be said that these evils, wholly or in part, are the result of moral laws, and are incidental to the present condition of mankind. Still, they are referrable to the providential government of God, and are apportioned accord-

ing to his pleasure. They are denominated punishments. When individuals are visited with distressing dispensations it is scriptural to say, that God punishes them. "Wherefore," says the prophet, "does a living man complain for the punishment of his sins?" But punishment is not necessarily judicial. It is sometimes disciplinary or corrective. It may be designed as chastisement and restraint, or as a motive to repentance. When God afflicts the wicked they ought to humble themselves under his mighty hand, and be profited by the rod of correction. When God says, "Why will ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more:" it is implied, that they pervert the proper end of present judgments, while they ought to be led by them to repentance. Also the afflictions which God brings upon the righteous are of the nature of parental discipline. It is written, "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law." The exhortation which speaketh unto the Christian is, "My son despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked by him; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

All God's dispensations toward men in this life, whether for the present joyous or grievous, are adapted to them as being in a state of probation and not of retribution. They are of the character not of judicial retribution, but of parental discipline. Reward and punishment in the judicial sense, succeed the judgment and belong to the things which are unseen and eternal.

2. Since this life is a season of probation for eternity, the long suffering of God is manifest in his dealings with the wicked. If, as some suppose, this life were a season of retribution in such a sense that men receive the full measure of their deserts here, Divine long-suffering would be excluded. Long-suffering implies endurance of provocation while punishment for the offence is suspended. But God assures us in his Word that he is a long-suffering God, and that he endures with much long-suffering his sinful creatures on earth. And since men are in a state of probation and do not receive judicial retribution for their conduct in this life, it is manifest that he exercises long-suffering in a great degree in his dispensations toward them. The apostle, referring to the apparent delay of God in the consummation of temporal things, ascribes it to his long-suffering: and he exhorts his brethren "to account that the long-suffering our Lord is salvation." It affords sinners opportunity for repentance and securing by faith an interest in Christ. All the time that he waits to be gracious unto sinners—every day and week and year, by which he protracts the season of their probation, is the time of his long-suffering. He not only endures their transgressions and their rejection of his mercy, without *punishing them* as they deserve; but he bestows upon them

innumerable blessings, grants them precious privileges, sets before them the strongest inducements to repent, strives with them by his Spirit, and with paternal tenderness says to them, "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zebiom? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together." Or as their Saviour he compassionates them, as when he beheld the city and wept over it, and exclaimed, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." Let the impenitent be assured, that the continuance of their season of probation, their privileges, the invitations of the gospel, and all the expressions of the Divine goodness and mercy which they receive, are to be ascribed to the long-suffering of God. But let them beware lest they abuse it to their remediless injury. It may not, it will not, if they continue practically to despise it, prove their salvation; because the apostle says, "What if God, willing to show his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction." Fearful it is to despise the riches of God's goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering.

3. Since this life is a season of probation for eternity, every person is continually rendering himself either a vessel of mercy or a vessel of wrath. The faithful and devoted christian derives benefit from the means of grace. By divine sanctification through the truth and ordinances of the gospel, he is changed into the image of Christ. When he passes through scenes of affliction and conflict, his graces are improved. He has occasion to glory in tribulation; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto him. By his work of faith and labor of love; by his effectual and fervent prayers; by his persevering zeal; self-denial for Christ's sake, and holy conversation, he is forming a character of growing meetness for the inheritence of the saints in light. His path is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

But the sinner, as long as he continues to cherish the love of sin and refuses to repent, adds iniquity to iniquity. As God deigns to bestow upon him the blessings of his providence and to grant him the means of grace, his obligations are ever increasing, and by violating them his sins are daily growing in number and aggravation. He is continually resisting divine light, practically despising the invitations of the gospel, and neglecting the great salvation. Accordingly, he abuses the *season of his probation* and all his religious privileges by

treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. Either this character, or that of the believer, every person is forming. The season of probation is to men of different characters, as the fertile soil and the genial climate are to the good tree and the corrupt one; causing the good tree to strike deeper and stronger its roots, to spread wider its branches, and to bear an increasing abundance of good fruit; while the same effect is produced in the corrupt tree, except that its fruit is evil. The only remedy for the sinner is to become a new creature in Christ.

4. Since this life is a season of probation for eternity, time is of immense value. If it could be occupied for no more important end than to gain earthly good, to get worldly riches and honors, even to secure the possession of a throne, a crown, an empire, it would not be sacrilege to waste it. But as a season of probation for eternity, it is sacred. Like the interests of the soul which depend on the right use of it, it is invaluable. It cannot be abused or wasted, except with loss or damage which will be felt through all eternity. A right use of it will be proportionally happy in its consequences. The Christian by occupying it in obeying the gospel, obtains salvation and eternal life. By faithful continuance in well-doing he secures glory, honor, and a blessed immortality. He lays up a treasure in heaven. The more faithfully he improves his time, the greater will be the value of his heavenly treasure, the richer his reward; because every one will receive according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. But the Christian is liable to make an unprofitable or perverted use of time; and when he does, he suffers loss—loss which can never be repaired. His reward will be in eternity less than it otherwise would have been. To every Christian, therefore, every portion of his probationary season, whether rightly employed or perverted, is of inestimable consequence. But to the impenitent sinner time is no less valuable. The consequences of his past abuse of it involve evil from which nothing can deliver him but the blood of Christ. His destiny in respect to two worlds, both eternal, is to be decided; it is in the remaining part only, of the season of his probation in which he is to make the decision. He who can estimate the importance of being saved from eternal woe, and of inheriting eternal life, can appreciate that remaining in time. Yet it may be only a day, an hour, a moment.

"Moment by moment years are past,
And one ere long will be our last.
'Twixt that, long fled, which gave us light,
And that, which soon shall end in night,
There is a point no eye can see,
Yet on it hangs eternity."

That point of time will result in the eternal salvation and happiness of the sinner, which is the moment when he seasonably begins to repent and be reconciled to God, or to trust in Christ. Or if the sinner neglects to do this, that point of time will result in his eternal perdition, which is the last moment in which he might have seasonably begun to pursue the way to heaven, but refused to do it. Oh, with what regret and anguish will the lost sinner reflect on abused time—not only the last moment in which he might have made his peace with God, but all the years, the weeks, the desecrated Sabbaths, which shall have filled up the season of his probation!

In conclusion—since this life is a season of probation for eternity, the condition of those who hear the Gospel preached is solemn and interesting.—If you have received the truth in faith and love: if you have acceded to the terms of the Gospel, and thus secured an interest in its promises, that event which will terminate the season of your probation, will introduce you to the mansions of the blessed, where you will enjoy the presence, behold the glory, and participate in the everlasting love of your blessed Redeemer. But, in the meantime, let it be your aim to perform with fidelity the service which he requires of you. He has committed to you talents, and he requires you to occupy till he come. So live that you may adorn his doctrine, recommend his holy religion, and honor his name. While life lasts the season of your probation continues, and your conduct will effect your eternal condition. Great is your reward in heaven! But it will be more or less great according to the degree of your faithfulness. Especially consider the infinite worthiness of your Lord, and the preciousness of his cause, and realize the the obligations which you are under to him.

But the reflection that this life is a season of probation for eternity is unspeakably solemn to you who have not obeyed the Gospel. There is danger that the preaching of the Gospel will ultimately be to you a savor of death unto death. It will unavoidably be so, if you abuse the remainder of the season of your probation as you have the past. That remainder consists of fleeting time. It may be a short, a very short space. Whether you are aged or young, your probationary term may soon expire. Oh, beware lest you have occasion to lament at last that the accepted time and the day of salvation have for ever closed: "That the harvest is past, the summer ended, and you are not saved."

ABUSE OF CHASTISEMENTS.

BY THE EDITOR.

If afflictions do not subdue and reclaim, there is nothing like them to confirm men in their evil ways, and render them hopeless. They will break the spirit of rebellion and bow us in penitence, or so sear the conscience and deaden all moral sensibility as that nothing can alarm or make an impression. And hence, the Lord not unfrequently ceases to chastise the guilty, for the simple reason that they will only "revolt more and more." He has used the rod upon them in vain. He has rebuked and chastised till the discipline has become an injury and not a benefit, and then, in righteous anger he gives them over as incorrigible. And when a man or a nation gets into so obdurate a state as that afflictions fail of their chief end, we may well despair of their salvation.

The judgments of God in this world are, no doubt, mainly disciplinary. They are visited upon men in mercy, and not in wrath; they are a Father's chastisements, and not the awards of a Lawgiver. They are meant to deter men from further sinning, or to reclaim them from evil ways into which they have fallen, or to soften the heart and prepare the way for more signal blessings. They are chosen to this end, and wisely adapted in their particular nature, and time, and manner of visitation, to secure it. They are means in the hands of God, of precaution, correction, reformation, obedience, and even growth in grace. They are effectual often, we know, when mercies have failed to win; when the goodness of God is all lost upon us; when the Spirit, operating through gentle means, has failed to accomplish towards us God's merciful designs.

But alas! how many brave out the judgments, as well as pervert and abuse the mercies of God! They despise reproof, and wax worse and worse under the discipline of the rod, however mercifully and severely employed. They are made to feel the wrath of God on account of their sins, and yet they will not give them up. One after another, he takes away their friends by death, and still they are unyielding. He ruins their fortunes, and disappoints all their earthly hopes, and reduces them to poverty, and yet they hold out, and only murmur in sullenness and despair. He lays his hand upon their persons, and takes away their strength, and brings them down to the borders of the grave, but, so far gone are they in evil, that, with death hanging over them, and their fears, it may be, very much alarmed, they will not repent and give glory to God. He lifts over our cities and over our borders, the sword

of the destroying angel, and thousands fall on every side; but they will not learn righteousness; even in their distress, they will not acknowledge and seek God. And then the Lord God takes them away, with a stroke of vengeance, or, giving them up as past recovery, leaves them to their chosen ways, to fill up the measure of their iniquities. This is the melancholly experience of millions of individual sinners, and of not a few families, cities, and nations. The Lord chastises till his chastisements, like his mercies, tend only to evil—embitter the spirit—harden the heart into adamant—sear the conscience—and arm the soul to make a more desperate resistence: and then, weary of chastising, and weary of the blindness, and hardness, and fault-finding, and blaspheming of the miserable and guilty being who are proof alike against mercy and judgment, love and wrath, he pronounces their doom "Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone."

When a man has grown so bad that no trial, affliction, or threatening seems to make him better, but only worse (which afflictions never fail to do if they do not humble and convert the soul) he is in extreme peril; and the removal of the rod is but the proof of his abandonment to the work and doom of his transgression. He has reached a point at which hope turns back, and beyond which no goodness wins, or wrath or judgment restrains. What shall reclaim such an one? Past mercies have only made him forgetful of God. Past judgments—it may be made severe, and oft repeated—have only made him more rebellious than ever before. And having past through so much affliction, and growing worse continually, what, short of death and and the thunder of final judgment, shall open his eyes and make him feel? So with with families. If God visits a family with sore and repeated afflictions, and yet they will not call upon him or mend their ways, that house "is nigh unto cursing;" and though he may forbear for the present, and smile on them in his providence, he will, when his own good time has come, pour out his "fury" upon it. The same is true of nations. So long as judgments, threatened or executed, have a good effect upon the moral sentiments and feelings and conduct of a people, we have reason to expect that God will hold over them the rod, and inflict it just as often and j st as severely as is necessary to gain their attention, correct their errors, and fit them to prfit by his blessings. But nations have often, like Israel and Egypt, so rebelled against chastisements, peculiar and decisive, that in rightous anger God has withheld the rod, and left them to the dominion of pride, luxury, lust, unbelief, and every evil thing which they desired, and thus their prosperity has proved a snare, and their unrestrained indulgence brought slow but sure and utter ruin upon them, in the ordinary course of things; or, provoked beyond endurance, he has by one ter-

rible stroke of judicial vengeance, blotted them from the map of nations.

In these times of severe judgments, when God has seemed to "come out of his place," to rebuke and chastise the earth; when war, famine, and pestilence, the chief instruments of his punishment, have combined their force and terror to afflict our race, it becomes every man, every family, every church, and nation, to inquire: "Are these judgments of Almighty God disciplinary or retributive? Have we reason to think they are ordered in mercy or unmixed wrath, after mercies have failed and milder means proved fruitless? Are they doing for us and upon us the works of mercy—abasing our souls in the dust before the offended Majesty of Heaven, inducing repentance and forsaking of sin, and constraining the exercise of prayer;—or are they doing the work of wrath, only serving to sink us into a state of greatly increased insensibility and profligacy?

To sin with a hard and unbelieving heart under such a visitation as the nation and the world have just received from the hands of God, is to defy him in the terribleness of his power and rush madly upon destruction. Sinners who remain stupid and unconverted through such seasons of trial, will have occasion to take up a doleful lamentation over their eternal prospects. Greatly do we fear that thousands will so have hardened their hearts in the day of our recent rebuke and peril, and will so quickly and thoroughly relapse into all their evil practices from which fear may have deterred them for a little season, as that no means nor motives shall hereafter have any power to bring them to repentance. At the close of this year of startling and terrible clastisement, the insulted and set at naught Jehoviah will say of them, in mingled grief and anger: 'Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more.

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SERMON DXII.

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THE PERSEVERANCE OF CHRIST.

"He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law."—ISAIAH 42: 4.

THE holy evangelist applies this prophecy to Jesus of Nazareth. It is a revelation of his untiring perseverance in his mediatorial work. Perseverance is a high virtue. We admire it even apart from its object. In a good cause it indicates a deep conviction of its importance, sincerity in principle, and fidelity in purpose. There are many noble examples of this virtue among men, but the most illustrious in history is the Son of God. Let us consider

THE PERSEVERANCE OF CHRIST IN ITS CONDITIONS, ITS ACTION, AND ITS TRIUMPHS.

I. THE PERSEVERANCE OF CHRIST IN ITS CONDITIONS.

1. *His unfailing merit.*—The necessity of merit in the world's Redeemer had its origin in the relation of man to law, and to salvation. The claims of law were imperative and unchanging on all that man possessed. Law, therefore, as the expression of immutable truth, must require the unreserved appropriation of his powers to the service of his Maker; and, as disobedience could have no tendency to diminish the extent of his obligations, its claims must have been as absolute in all respects after, as before the fall. Besides, as a single act of rebellion must imply contempt of Jehovah's authority and defiance of his justice, man must have been obnoxious to all the penalties of the law. And as no act of obedience can have any effect to counteract an instance of disobedience, and as the necessary result of rebellion was the depravation of the whole man, his condition as a sinner was legally hopeless. Finally, as the claims of law must be at each subsequent moment precisely what they would have been, if man had retained his original perfection, and as his disabilities must remain what they were in the fall, an infinite accumulation of guilt was legally certain. The relation of man to law was therefore that of a sinner under sentence of death, with no possibility of self-redemption.

In his relation to salvation, as guilty, he was a candidate for pardon; as morally dead, he was a candidate for regeneration; as

impure, he was a candidate for santification; and as immortal, he was a candidate for heaven.

Now, the infinite difference between what man was as a sinner, and what he would be as saved, must constitute the ground and measure of the merit needed, to render the offer of salvation possible. Without this merit, pardon would assault the law in its spirit; regeneration, in its penalties; sanctification, in its effects.

The fact of infinite merit in the Redeemer is rendered certain by the fact of salvation; for the law having infinite claims, no one of which ever has been, or can be met by the sinner, and he being saved in the face of the law, either his claims have been compromised, or the merit of the substitute has been equal to his demerit; and as the former is impossible, the latter is certain. It is also confirmed by the character of the Redeemer. He was God-man. And we rest the extent of his merits not upon the amount of his sufferings, but upon the dignity of the sufferer. As we should suppose, *a priori*, that nothing less than an infinite nature could offer a sacrifice of infinite merit, so the Father has demonstrated in the gift of Emmanuel for the offering. Let then the problem be put in its severest form—the law unyielding, how to save the sinner?—And the answer is, "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

The philosophy of merit is deep as the bosom of God, and, of course, to us fathomless. But this, to the student of nature, tends strongly to confirm the fact; for he finds inexplicable phenomena everywhere, and the suffering of one in behalf of another is so common as to excite neither surprise nor attention. Besides, if the Christian scheme were comprehensible by us in all its principles and facts, it would be human, and hence valueless. That the sufferings and acts of Jesus should be a substitute for legal demands upon sinners, addresses not our reason but our faith—faith divinely produced in the soul, greatly strengthened by the analogy of nature, positively commanded by the evidence of revelation, and fully vindicated by experience. The clear development of this profound philosophy is in Scripture and in history. Its last expression is the will of God. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

The history of merit is the history of Jesus. The surrender of life was a central crisis in that history. But it is not to this alone that we are to look for merit in behalf of the race. We have only to reflect that no single remedial act of the adorable Redeemer could be in any way necessary to himself; that every such *act was* so much more than was due from him, to be impressed *with the truth that* they are all meritorious, and parts of the one *great offering in* behalf of the world. The work of salvation in

progress for more than four thousand years, before the crucifixion, argues the efficacy of mediatorial acts, and strongly indicates their existence. Now the frequent appearance of a Divine Person remedially engaged in the history of the pre-advent church, comes in to confirm this conviction. Grant that all these acts would have availed nothing without the death-scene. It is also true that these were indispensable conditions of that scene—that the existence of one meritorious act involves the principles and certainty of all essential ones—that from the earliest date of determined redemption, this world has been given up to the Messiah for the sole purpose of an effort to save it—and its history has hence been the product of this effort in action with depraved humanity. Merit—not of a single act merely—but of the Son of God; of the Saviour as the whole, in character, and action, begins therefore with man's probation, and must extend to its close.

The effect of this view of the necessity of merit; of the fact of merit; the philosophy of merit; and the history of merit, is to show that the resources of the Saviour in this respect are like his nature infinite, and hence unfailing; and this is the first great condition of his unexampled perseverance.

2. *His unlimited power.*—Our idea of power is an inference from the fact of power. Limited acts indicate the agency of limited power. Those acts which to us are illimitable suggest the idea of infinite power. Hence Divine Revelation, to teach us the infinite power of Christ, ascribes to him the work of creation in its absolute, universal, and special sense; and informs us that he will fold up this vast universe as a vesture and lay it aside. These are acts which, by the laws of our being, suggest and prove the infinite power of Christ. When, after this, we learn from authority that he is invested with the awful attribute of omnipotence, we believe it. But this is physical power. A higher necessity exists. Spiritual changes are required to prepare man for endless happiness, which demand a moral power as infinite as that physical power which made the world. What less than this can rouse a sinner from his slumber of death—crush the rebellion of his heart—roll away the burden of his guilt—cleanse his soul from its deep-struck pollutions—and bring him to a permanent residence in heaven? What less than this can break down the barriers which sin has raised to the progress of truth, and hold up the throne of infinite justice, while the work of saving sinners goes on? And here also our evidence both of authority and of fact is perfectly decisive. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Not the physical power by which he made the worlds, certainly. This he always had. But the power in heaven to arrest the avenger of blood—to hold the thunders of Divine wrath in abeyance, and to send out the waves of truth, and love, and glory, to deluge the earth. The "power on earth to forgive sins" and "to cleanse from all unrighteousness." This interpretation *is sustained by innumerable facts.* Sinners are awakened, regenerated, sanctified, saved. The justice of God is maintained,

and his throne is secure while the work of redemption is in progress. Thus the question of power is settled. It is infinite as the nature of God. No possible demand can exhaust or diminish it. The fiercest assault of fallen men—the wildest onset of millions of demons can not *drive* him from the mediatorial throne. From it he directs the affairs of the remedial dispensation amid the tumults and mad strife of the race infuriated by Satan, with the calmness and dignity and ease of Omnipotence. His resources of power are unfailing, and this is the second condition of his perseverance, till the world shall be lit up with the flames of the judgment.

3. *His infinite wisdom.*—The direction of Almighty power in the work of salvation must be the highest possible effort of wisdom. Difficulties more formidable than we can appreciate must crowd every moment of the mediatorial reign. They baffle the skill of the wisest of men, as often as they engage them. Not indeed in the choice of remedies. One sole relief for the woes of the world is mentioned by the omniscient God. But the disease is so malignant and mysterious that no man can know it. The remedy is too profound for the penetration of finite powers. The place, the time, and the mode of its application, are all infinitely beyond our reach. Omniscience alone is adequate security against fatal mistakes, in such a work as an attempt to save a soul. It is a fearful thing to be limited in intelligence even when we treat the diseases of the body. The peril of life is too often the sad necessity imposed by defective skill. But how much more fearful would be the result of an error in this great Physician. The undying soul is the seat of the disease. The death it threatens is damnation in hell. No wisdom but the unerring is equal to the cure. The most intelligent of men stand aghast before an agonizing sinner sinking to perdition. But the Son of God knows instantly what to do. He who could penetrate the dark bosom of deceit and declare its hypocrisy while it rejoiced in its fancied concealment—he who "needed not that any should testify to him of man, for he knew what was in man"—he can never be at loss to know the power of his own blood—the instant in which its application becomes practicable in the sovereignty of right, and saving in the sphere of the doomed.

The same Omniscient sight penetrates the utmost extreme of this world's darkness, sees at a glance its part, and its whole of corruption, and suffering—its demerit and exposures. He who is omnipresent in history—the history not only of time but eternity, not only of man but of God, sees the work to be done and the way to do it, which the renovation of the race, the establishment of "judgment in the continents of earth," and "the isles of the sea" require. If then to unfailing merit and unlimited power, we add the Saviour's infinite wisdom to direct in the application of both, we have the third great condition upon which this perseverance depends.

4. *His exhaustless love.*—Only one question remains. Has he *love to move* him to the use of his merit, his power, and his wis-

dom? The demands upon his love are seen in the fact that his efforts are required for the good of the race alone. No necessity for one of them exists in the nature or wants of the Son of God. For man he must have had a love so deep, so infinite as to move him to all his mediatorial acts. And he must toil not merely for the needy and the wretched, but for the corrupt, the guilty, "the rebellious." His vast preparations extending through thousands of years were expressly for a mission to a world in arms against the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! A mission not to destroy, but to save! What depths of holy love must have dwelt in his infinite mind to have moved him to this! It was sufficient. It brought him from the realms of light. It beamed from his countenance. It breathed in his language. It was the ruling element of his acts. It mingled in his miracles, in his private interviews with his chosen ones, and in his stern rebukes to the hypocrites, by whom he was surrounded. It carried him to the cross. It gushed from his heart in the very agonies of death. It bore him to the intercessor's throne. It has sustained him there to this hour. And it is impossible for us to conceive of a necessity greater than that which has demanded his love, since the morning of redemption dawned upon the race, of a principle of love in *possible*, not already in *actual* requisition. Our faith in the infinity of Jesus' love wants not a single quality of indubitable evidence. Whatever therefore his unfailing merit would justify; whatever his unlimited power can accomplish, and his infinite wisdom vindicate, his exhaustless love moves him to do. And this is enough. Other causes there doubtless are — causes that lie deep in the infinite intelligence — but these are satisfactory to us. In merit, and power, and wisdom, and love, "he shall not fail." He will therefore not be "discouraged."

II. THE PERSEVERANCE OF CHRIST IN ITS ACTION.

1. *It is righteous in its character.*—He has been engaged in no selfish work — no attempt to overreach or destroy his enemies. Not a single act of resentment can be traced in all his history. But he saw that the laws of God had been set aside in this earth, trampled upon by the very beings for whose protection they were designed. That man had risen up against his fellow-man, that war and blood had followed in the train of angry passion, proud selfishness, and ungodly ambition. That "justice had gone away backward," retreating in anger from a world in which she had been insulted and defied. "To set judgment in the earth," and give his righteous law to the isles of the sea, was therefore his great and glorious work. The darkness which hung like the night of Egypt over the earth was to be dispersed — man's attention to be engaged to a Divine voice, speaking to his inner nature — his thoughtfulness of God, spirit, law, duty, death, heaven, and hell to be raised to a habit — godly sorrow for sin to be wrought in his heart — faith to supersede infidelity. Sin in all its guilt to be pardoned — the soul, dead to God and truth, to be brought to life — *polluted, to be cleansed* from sin. This for the individual.

For society, the purity and power of a Christian civilization were to be extended to the remotest parts of the earth. A higher, holier life was to be poured through the social system. War, aggression, and injustice of every form to be superseded by good-will to men. The universal brotherhood of humanity to become a recognized reality. Jehovah enthroned in the hearts of men to become the acknowledged Sovereign of the race, and "the earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

This is the work in which the Son of God is engaged. Verily it is righteous in its character, compared either with the laws of eternal rectitude, or the commonly received opinions of men. Righteous in view of the wants and woes, the bliss and the destiny of the race. Righteous?—Nay, it is benevolent; it is gracious in every principle it involves, in every impulse it gives to human thought and feeling; it is glorious in every issue revealed to sense, or consciousness, or faith.

2. *It is various in its expedients.* — The Divine Redeemer has confined himself to no single mode of carrying out his gracious purposes. His anxiety to succeed, and our vast debt of gratitude are indicated by the almost infinite variety of the means he has adopted.

Look, for instance, at the general system of rewards and punishments — the invariable connection established between virtue and happiness, vice and misery — the manifestations of himself as the remedial governor of this revolted province of Jehovah's empire. He swept an entire race of sinners from the earth; He elected the family of Abraham to be the witnesses of his power and medium of communication with the whole world. He delivered his law amid the thunders of Sinai; He moved before Israel in the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire; He scourged the rebels of Palestine by war, and pestilence, and death; terrible vengeance fell upon Sodom and Egypt, Idumea and Babylon; the tabernacle, the temple, and the cross revealed the Divine authority of law, the exalted dignity of worship, and the ineffable glories of redemption. The self-consciousness, the language and the acts of the righteous attest the power of pardon, the wonders of a spiritual resurrection, and the moral splendors of a holy life. Faith disarms the tyrant death — snatches from the grave its victim, and lights up eternity with the smiles of the Godhead. But proud, rebellious sinners, in war with Jehovah, by guilty millions, "bite the dust," doomed and damned forever. Thus does the adorable Redeemer seek to guard the laws upon which the harmony of the universe depends, and retrieve the affairs of earth.

Look also at miracles and prophecies.—To emancipate Israel from the thraldom of Egypt, he turned her river into blood, and slew her first-born. He led his people triumphantly through the *divided* waters, and overwhelmed their raging enemies. In the *might of* his providence he poured the torrent from the smitten *rock*, sent bread from heaven, and brought quails upon the camp

of Israel. He divided Jordan by his power, and established his colony upon the soil of his foes. He selected a few from the ranks of his people, and fixing their gaze toward the coming future, he drew aside the veil which concealed the latter days. They saw with prophet's ken a sufferer hang upon a cross. They saw the blood that gushed from his wounds. They saw the light that beamed from his soul, flashing through the earth and the heavens. Before the power that went out from the dying Christ they saw types and shadows fleeing away — pagan temples crumbling to dust — souls by millions leaping from the chains of superstition into the glorious liberty of the sons of God — dynasties and kingdoms falling, rising, forming and partaking of a new, a strange, a potent life. They saw, and wrote, and shouted, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." And he came as was predicted. This sinful world saw its Creator veiled in humanity; saw him "without sin," the model of perfection; saw him assert by his miracles his sovereignty over nature's laws; heard the gracious words that fell from his lips; saw him die amid the convulsions of nature, and rise in triumph from the tomb. A risen Christ walked abroad in the midst of his foes, and mingled with his disciples, breathing kindness and consolation to their hearts. Sinners upon earth verily saw their Lord and Saviour ascending to heaven! What a demonstration of the reality of souls, and of resurrection-bodies — of the spirit-world, and our relation to it! What displays of goodness had passed before the eyes of men! What redeeming merit had been concentrated in his death! What triumph in the fulfillment of prophecy, and the demonstration of the whole Christian scheme! What wonder that the truth established amid such displays of love and power proves too mighty for the "gates of hell?" Thus was this great expedient, upon which all others depended, tried in the sight of angels and men.

But others were to follow. "I will send the Comforter" was his gracious promise to his desponding disciples—"I will send the Comforter" — the glorious announcement to a world in anguish! And the Comforter came, but no mortal could tell the extent of the gift. He was light to the benighted—reproof to the obdurate —consolation to the sorrowing—sanctification to the impure! In short, a constant message from eternity, calling spirits away from this stranger-land to a congenial home in heaven—the might of God rescuing souls from the grasp of the Devil—a guide to immortality so bright with the effulgence of Divinity as to light up the path of the pilgrim through time and the grave to the land of the blessed.

And when Christ had gone, it was found that he had left behind him the elements of a holy fellowship, a spiritual brotherhood, a living church; that these, by their own celestial affinities, approached each other — combined and formed an imperishable *unity, the outward manifestation of which was the kingdom of God on earth, visible to men. Thenceforward, as before, it should be impossible to say there is no God in history. His very habita-*

tion should be palpable to the senses, and his reign upon earth a living, distinguishable, powerful fact, to deny which, would be to assail all faith in verities, and resolve universal being into phantasms; and thus the church has stood, varying in her external forms, but indestructible in her essential being — a veritable theocracy in the midst of anarchy, despotism, and misrule — "the light of the world"—"a city set upon a hill."

This Divine institution included many of the gracious expedients relied upon by the Saviour, for the redemption of man. Her sacraments were not only signs and seals of the spiritual covenant between Christ and her members—they were monuments of her organization, her principles and her heroism. To this day they attract the gaze of a sinking world, as a light upon the shore does that of the tempest-tossed mariner. They defy the shafts of infidelity, and bless the world by their support and diffusion of Divine truth.

Her Bible had been early commenced. "Holy men of old wrote and spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The Son of God took his place in the revelation. The apostles recorded their message, and the sacred canon closed. Like the death of Christ in relation to his atoning acts, this Holy Book is central in relation to the means of moral illumination; it is pure light directly from Heaven; it is God teaching by language! declaring the attributes of his nature—the rights of his sovereignty—the rebellion of man, and the way of salvation! Appealing by law to his sense of duty — by threatenings, to his fears — and by promises, to his hopes; addressing his reason by the loftiness of its truths, the force of its diction, the grasp of its literature, and the sublimity of its science — to his sensibilities, by the benevolence of its proposals, the energy of its pathos, and the power of its love. With these mastering qualities it is sent through the church into all the world, a Divine expedient for the salvation of the race.

Her ministry is appointed by Jehovah himself. They are men of like passions with ourselves, sent out to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. From the lips of our *brethren*, whose integrity we know, we hear intelligence from the spiritual world — from the throne of grace — from God, the Holy Trinity. From hearts imbued with a Saviour's love they proclaim mercy for sinners. By Divine authority they summon us to a holy life; they teach us how to glorify God; they offer us peace and triumph in death, and eternal happiness in heaven. From the sacred oracles they instruct, convince, and persuade us. They "warn us night and day with tears" to "flee from the wrath to come"— to make our calling and election sure. What a gracious expedient is this!

And besides all these, the Redeemer will use the governments of earth for the purposes of his mercy. Monarchs and subjects, consciously or unconsciously, shall conspire to prepare the way for *his triumphant* march. "The very wrath of man shall praise *him;*" the laws of nature shall obey his will; science shall bring *her ample* treasures, and lay them submissively at his feet. *Surely* the perseverance of Christ is various in its expedients.

4. *It is against great difficulties.*—Sin, of course, in all its forms, stands opposed to the work attempted by the Saviour. With this Satanic influence is largely combined. But there are four discouraging facts in the habits of men, which must be considered.

The first is the earthliness of sinners. However it may have been originally, it cannot be denied that there is at present a strong affinity between man and this lower world. To matter far more naturally than to spirit he looks for the relief of his woes, and the gratification of his desires. The "things that are seen," have far more power to attract and charm him than "the things that are not seen." Hence the acquisition of treasure here occupies much more of his attention than the laying up of treasure in heaven! What he shall eat, and drink, and wear absorb him so completely, that he has no time to study how he may glorify God! Life here is so dear to him, that he will not inquire how he may prepare to die, nor what is the value to him of life eternal! Indeed, such is his exceeding earthliness, that the most powerful influences from above can only rouse him to a few moments' reflection upon the wants of his higher nature, when, like the needle to the pole, he turns at once to his worldly pursuits, and grasps his treasures with the tenacity of despair. This is no extraordinary development of fallen humanity. It is peculiar to no age, to no land. From as far back as the dark history of man can be traced, it has mastered his intellect, absorbed his sensibilities, and controlled his will. The Saviour has met it at every step, in his persevering attempts to "set judgment in the earth." Hard, indeed, is the struggle by which it is overcome: ever and anon it rallies to the conflict; and after all the triumphs over it for near six thousand years, see what amazing strength it still possesses! Amongst the millions of earth, where moments are spent in spiritual employments, ages are devoted to earthly! For one who in thought, and feeling, and action, claims kindred with the skies, you meet with thousands who assert affinity to the earth. The perseverance of Christ is against all this, and still he is "not discouraged."

Next, the fondness for the ideal, in preference to the real. It is a painful fact that men are living, in the main, in an ideal world —are practicing upon themselves a gross and nearly universal fraud—exchanging, as sources of gratification, the Divine realities of time and eternity, for the phantoms of nature and sin. It is not the resources of his present condition, but of an imaginary future one upon which he depends for his happiness. No real form of home, or equipage, or power, is the model of his satisfied state. In any of these there is enough to offend his taste, to degrade his ambition, to cramp his genius, and, upon the great whole, to reduce him to a level with his fellows. He soon learns enough of the trials and defects and dangers of any man he knows, not to wish exactly *his* position, and hence, an ideal existence, the forms *of which are constantly* floating before him, absorbs his attention, *and enlists his feelings.* To obtain this, he practically throws

away the realities which alone deserve his consideration, and can render him happy. Behold now the extremes of his folly and the greatness of his errors! Total depravity is his real condition, but high moral excellence his ideal. Enmity against God is his real habit of mind, but high reverence for the principles of rectitude his ideal! Danger of eternal damnation his real state, but almost certainty of heaven his ideal! When the duty of repentance is urged home upon his conscience, his fancied security defeats the effort. Despite the real claims of reciprocity, he prefers the imaginary pleasures of injustice, fraud, and oppression! If the reality of the Divine favor be placed in competition with the ideal benefits of human, he prefers the latter—the unreal joys of sin to the sublime pleasures of holiness—the fancied glories of earth to the changeless glories of heaven!

Nations too run the round of dreaming life, and grasping the shadow lose the prize. The permanence and splendor of empire are placed now in the triumph of the monarch, and now in the elevation of the people—now in concession, and now in grinding to the earth all aspirants for liberty—now in the ignorance, and now in the education of the masses—now in peace and now in war. They seek relief from the evils of the social state at one time in action, at another in reäction—now in enacting, and now in repealing laws—now in constructing, and now in destroying constitutions—now in the stringent regime of a religious establishment, and now in the grossest licentiousness. They fly at one moment to universal faith, at another to universal skepticism. Thus they forget utterly the sovereign power of that simple truth, "Happy is that people whose God is the Lord." This is the real—the defined, the rejected real, in which alone the imperishable honor of a nation consists.

This is a mere intimation of the formidable power of the ideal, as it has usurped the place of the real, in this raving, bedlam, headlong world. With the whole of it the blessed Saviour has had to contend for these thousands of years. He seeks to wake the soul of man from this bewildering dream—to arrest this wild search for things that are not, and confer eternal blessedness in the things that are. Now, by reflecting upon the vast results which would follow the entire devotion of the race to Divine realities, we shall extend our convictions of the immense power of fiction in preventing the establishment of justice in the earth. But how it exalts our opinion of the perseverance of Christ, to find that he is not discouraged, though the world he seeks to save constantly prefers a dream or a shadow to the richest gifts of his love.

Next a cold individualism presents itself in opposition to the benevolent purposes of the Redeemer. In man's intended state, he is the brother of his fellow-man. His heart beats in unison *with the great* heart of humanity. He forms a willing, happy part *of one grand* and perfect whole. He needs the universal life of *that social system* which God designed, infinitely more than that

system needs him. Had the fall left *so* much of Jehovah's work untouched, how speedily might the renovating life run through the mass. But under the action of sin, the selfish element has risen above the social! *The individual* has reached an importance far exceeding the whole race! How will an act or scheme affect *me* is the great question, not how will it affect the world. If God commands us to feed the hungry—to educate the ignorant—to send the gospel to the heathen—to give the Bible to the world, the sufferer must bear his anguish, and the messenger of salvation must delay his errand of mercy, until, with the exactness of numbers, it can be ascertained how it will affect the comforts, the luxuries, the honor of *the individual!* Alas! how frequently will even the suspicion of danger here give the negative to the most importunate demands of human wretchedness. And though sinners are perishing by thousands, and though the voice of Jesus is calling in tones of melting love, and beseeching earnestness for help to rescue the purchase of his blood, the most capricious demands of *the individual* must have the preference. The world must move on to perdition until it is perfectly compatible with the temporal interests—the personal convenience—and imagined honor of the individual to send them the word of life! Let any man, if he can, repel this degrading charge. Let him prove the aspersion false: he shall have our gratitude. But he cannot. His search for vindicating facts will show him mind in all its energies, running out into the world's extreme, taxing man and beast, water, earth, and air, for selfish purposes, and demanding large revenues of praise for the favors it has yielded by the way, to importunate want. But against all this the Saviour perseveres. The salvation of the world must be achieved though it be done in detail. "He will not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the earth."

Finally, we notice the misdirection of the philosophical spirit. Philosophy is a real want and a natural result of humanity. And could it from the beginning have exerted its strength in tracing the relation of man to God—of men to each other, and the relation of all phenomena to their final moral causes; had it summed up all its discoveries in the practical and the good, what immense power it would have wielded for the benefit of the race.

But now see it satisfied in tracing the relations of one particle of matter to another—its position, self—its aim, science—its scope, creation with God and eternity omitted, or only casually mentioned—and its results, infidelity! What system of philosophy, physical or metaphysical, has the Bible for its stand-point—the glory of God for its object—eternity for its sphere, and the salvation of souls for its final cause? Alas! the very tendency which God designed to lead immortal spirits to himself has borne them far from him. It has expended itself in false and impracticable theories for the relief of human woes. It has generated a pride of *opinion which scorns* to obtain a knowledge of the essential *good from the meek* and lowly Saviour. The defeats of ages have

not sufficed to teach it discretion—to check its wild and visionary schemes for dispensing with regeneration, and expelling God from the universe. Of the radical misdirection of the philosophical spirit, no other proof is needed than the fact that it does not end in faith. The legitimate tendency of all true philosophy is to simple faith—faith in God, in the Bible, in the Redeemer, in heaven and hell. What then can be said of that which levels its shafts at the mediatorial throne, and defies the power of Jehovah? No just understanding of its evils can be possible to us. Its worst manifestations are not in systems formally elaborated and set forth It infuses its deadly poison into the secret thoughts of men. J penetrates the very foundations of virtue. It artfully insinuat itself even into the sacred desk, and from the very watch-towers of Zion, holds friendly intercourse with her vilest foes. But still the Saviour is not discouraged. Regarding these as mere specimens of the barriers in his way, I am sure it must be conceded his perseverance is against great difficulties.

4. *It is long continued.*—If for twenty years the father strives to reclaim his prodigal son, he is deemed a model of forbearance. But if, for the whole of the time, this child of Belial should use every opportunity to insult and revile that father; if he should repay every act of his love with violence, and still no word of severity should escape the paternal lips, but entreaties and tears of affection should respond to this rage, till life itself yields to grief, what language could express the astonishment of the world at such God-like patience? But what is the endurance of filial ingratitude for a score of years, or for a century, compared with the perseverance of Christ in his mediatorial work? All the ingratitude of men, and the rage of demons, for near six thousand years, have not been enough to drive him from the seat of mercy. Every wave of corruption that has dashed against the throne has been answered by a smile! Every word of blasphemy, by the language of tenderness and love! Generation after generation has risen in fiercest war against the Son of God, laughed, and wept, and cursed, and died! But the next generation has found him there with his hands of compassion extended to receive them! The vilest sinner that shall be born upon earth will find him on the mediatorial throne, waiting to hail him with the offer of mercy as he vents his rage against the Lamb of God. The fury of hell has assaulted his position in ceaseless storms, since the first look of compassion was cast upon a ruined world, but there he remains in the fullness of infinite merit—in the calmness of unlimited power—in the intelligence of omniscient wisdom, and in the activity of exhaustless love. And he will remain until the trump of judgment shall sound. Verily the perseverance of Christ in its action, is righteous in character, various in its expedients, against great difficulties, and long continued.

III. THE PERSEVERANCE OF CHRIST IN ITS TRIUMPHS.

1. *The triumph indicated.*—By prophecy, by the nature of Christ, *and by the mode of his action.* "And the Lord God said unto

the serpent, I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots: and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord: and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked."—Here the *fact* of triumph is clearly indicated. To doubt it must therefore be infidelity.—The nature of the triumph is set forth in the following glowing imagery: "And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them."—Here is the triumph of the moral over the physical. The strength of the lion shall yield to the influence of the little child! The dominion of "the earthly" must come to an end, and the ascendency of the spiritual be complete.—The triumph of the real over the ideal. "Righteousness" and "faithfulness," the two great realities, shall gird the Redeemer, and the vast fictions of sin and infidelity must disappear before him.—The triumph of the social over the selfish. The wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the kid, the child and the asp, all mingling in perfect harmony, symbolize the social state, under the peaceful reign of God's Messiah.—And the triumph of the true over the false, "for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." The knowledge of the Lord is the soul of truth, the sum of philosophy, the centre of science. The earth *filled* with the knowledge of the Lord must therefore secure the universal prevalence of truth, the right direction of the philosophical spirit, and the purification of every department of science.

This, in general, is the triumph of Christ, indicated. To understand, in any adequate degree, these sublime indications, we must study with deep penetration every prophecy of the Bible, every attribute of the Son of God, and every development of his history,—a study which may well engage the master-minds of the race. However intense and glowing may be our visions of Messiah's reign, a deeper understanding of its Divine indications must render them more so. Such is the momentous personal interest which we have in the theme, that we should pause before it till our souls themselves become concentrated faith; till time is annihilated, and heaven and earth are wrapped in the blaze of millennial day.

2. *The triumph progressive.*—The purposes of God did not include the immediate conquest of the world. There are reasons to

believe the true nature and destiny of man did not admit of it. Nor were the triumphs of Christ all reserved for the final period of his reign. They commenced with the first fact of redemption, and every additional fact was a triumph over all the obstacles opposed to its occurrence; and the series of facts which make up his history, have indicated the progress of his victories. These facts, heralded by prophets, have astonished the world by their striking significance and miraculous power.

Principles have also been gradually developed, which have grappled with their antagonists in the presence of sinners. Atonement by sacrifice has appeared against inexorable doom—Divine influence against human obduracy—pardon against the enormity of sin—life against death—holiness against depravity—liberty against fate—and finally, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," against adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like." Long and severe has been the contest between these mysterious forces. To the eye of man it may have appeared doubtful on which side victory would turn. But by universal consent it ought to "turn on the Lord's side," and this itself is a triumph.

But the triumph progressive may be traced in the application of these great principles. Mark it in the individual:—At the earliest dawn of reason the attempt is commenced to rescue him from the ruins of the fall. Conviction for sin, and a sense of duty to God, are among his first impressions. These gracious influences increase from year to year, but there are no indications of surrender. Indeed, the depravity of his nature gathers strength from opposition, until from his outward vileness it begins to be feared that he is left "to believe a lie, that he might be damned." But at length his attention, his whole intellect, is conquered. His heart and his will yield to the sway of an invisible power, and you may hear him say—

> "Nay, but I yield, I yield—
> I can hold out no more;
> I sink, by dying love compelled,
> And own thee conqueror."

A new and glorious life springs up within him. But he gradually discovers his remaining depravity, and it is probably long before this is totally removed, and the triumph in his entire nature complete. Even then the war is not ended. He can resist no worldly allurement—no temptation, but by that faith which transfers the battle to the Saviour. *His* power conquers every foe, even death itself, and the soul, emancipated, finds its home at last in the bosom of God. This is an outline of his engagements with the world, and of his gradual triumphs over it. Early in its history he set in motion a train of expedients for its recovery from ruin. Long darkness brooded over it, but the Saviour was not

discouraged. He triumphed in the salvation of individuals. He triumphed in the deluge. He triumphed in Egypt. He triumphed in Palestine—at the tomb of Joseph—in Germany—in France—in England—in America; and at this moment his triumphs are spreading "from sea to sea," and "from the rivers to the ends of the earth." Progressive civilization—progressive Christianity, is all the triumph of Christ. It is true, there is still a vast amount of iniquity upon earth. Sin rages with fearful malice, but the energy of Christ must conquer in the future as it has done in the past. His gracious expedients are developing power that must be irresistible. Not a principle of evil, not a style of sin exists but what has been overcome. Can any man point to grosser darkness than has yielded to the glorious beams of the Sun of Righteousness—more savage fury than that which his presence has tamed—viler sinners than have been already subdued, or deeper pollution than his blood has washed away? The world, then, in effect, is already conquered. "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him; having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it."

3. *The triumph complete.*—This is revealed partly to experience, but mainly to faith. The principles, and many of the facts involved in the final triumph have been graciously given to our own enjoyment. We know what is meant by the conquest of love. We have only to take the facts of a sinner saved by grace, and suppose them carried directly out into all the world, to have a tolerably distinct idea of the triumph of the Saviour accomplished. The power of faith enlarges the conception, and increases the brightness of the scene. The moral is to triumph over the physical—the real over the ideal—the social over the selfish—the true over the false.

We may now pause and contemplate the results of these mighty changes. In every part of the world the facts and forms of matter shall lose their control over the affections of men, the spiritual shall subdue the earthly, and the whole living race shall be absorbed in the glory of God. All ideal and visionary schemes will be lost in the richness and power of Divine realities: all cold and degrading selfishness merged in one grand and glorious Christian fellowship. Love—"perfect love," will fill every heart, beam from every eye, break from every tongue. Every one, from the youngest to the oldest, shall be moved by the same rich, overflowing benevolence that gushes from the heart of the Saviour. The philosophical spirit will have turned all its energies toward God and eternity. Minds with quickened power will rush out into every field of science to gather new truths, to illustrate the character of God and the reign of Messiah. In the light of indications clear to faith, even from our present stand-point, we may see much

of the glories of such a triumph. What relief from the evils that now crush our enfeebled spirits—from the dismal night of infidelity—from the cruel injustice that wrongs our fellow-men—from the fell impurities that invade the sacredness of virtue—from the fearful oaths and blasphemies that break upon our ears. But let us extend the view:—What purity in the church in that bright day—what holy spirituality, what unity and power—what universal knowledge of the Scriptures—what clearness and force in preaching—what growth in grace—what bursting joy and shouts of triumph and hallelujahs will rend the heavens. Governments will have found their legitimate final cause in the greatest good of the whole. What relief, then, from the intrigues of designing men—from anarchy and oppression—from vicious laws and defective administration. Harmony in feeling, in purpose, in action, will have emancipated the science of government from its only embarrassments. Kings and queens shall become nursing fathers and mothers in Israel. And in very deed "the nations and kingdoms of this earth shall become the nations and kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ."

From another stand-point we shall better see the moral beauties of a redeemed world. Removed to the heights of glory we shall look out upon the new creation, and in shouts of joy swell the loud anthem of praise that rolls up from every land beneath the sun. Another scene of amazing grandeur will open at the judgment; when the vast generations of man shall await their doom from the lips of the Redeemer; when at his terrific sentence the wicked shall "depart into everlasting fire"—and at his joyous command the righteous shall "enter into life eternal." *Then shall the triumph be complete.*

1. *From the whole it appears that the Saviour has deserved to conquer.* His infinite merit, his unlimited power, his unfailing wisdom and exhaustless love are worthy of the triumphs indicated. His unwearied exertions for the lapse of ages, amid the revilings of his foes have richly earned the victory. With what intense interest do we gaze upon him, as by the light of revelation he stands revealed—the mediator—in his toils and sufferings—in his entreaties and prayers, now in heaven; making the vast preparations which atonement requires; now on earth, proclaiming salvation—agonizing, dying—and again in heaven, betwixt guilty man and flaming justice, pleading for time, and moving the vast instrumentalities of redemption to save the souls of men. We watch every movement with deepest anxiety — tremble when victory seems doubtful, and rejoice with unutterable joy as he triumphs in the fearful strife.

2. *Chiefly we would urge the vast power of the Saviour's example.* We are soon weary under the burdens of the church—soon discouraged when we see how hard a world this is to save. We ask with intense concern, "Is his mercy clean gone for ever; doth his promise fail forevermore?" But let us listen to the answer of the holy prophet: "He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he

have set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law." How severe a rebuke to our alarm, our discouragements! While Jesus remains upon the mediatorial throne, shall we yield under the pressure of difficulties? While he prays for his enemies, shall we abandon them? God forbid. At every instant of despondency, in every moment of defeat, let us remember the perseverance of Christ—righteous in its action, various in its expedients, against great difficulties, and long continued. If the church would receive its impulse from the action of Christ—if *his mind* were infused throughout the mass of his disciples, what indomitable energy, what unconquerable resolution, what glorious triumph would mark her career.

3. *How strong is the encouragement from the assurances of success.* If we are inclined to despair, let us look at the triumph indicated, the triumph progressive, and the triumph complete. It must utterly destroy our unbelief to master these great and glorious truths. Nay, it must create A BURNING ZEAL TO COÖPERATE IN HIS LABORS, TO IMITATE HIS PERSEVERANCE, AND TO SHARE HIS TRIUMPHS. May God grant it, for Christ's sake.

SERMON DXIII.

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THE PAST AND THE PRESENT.

"Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings and brought you unto myself."—EXODUS 19 : 4.

THIS passage has reference to the interposition and care o God's providence over the children of Israel. It is highly figurative. As an eagle bears her young upon her wings, so God had carried his people on the uplifted wing of his providence. Afflicted and oppressed, he had interposed for their deliverance. He had shielded them amid persecution and peril. He had discomfited and confounded their enemies; had declared his interest in them by miracle and manifestation. The pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night; the miraculous supply of food and water; the defeat and destruction of their oppressors, are all illustrious examples of the Divine protection and providence.

A striking analogy may be traced between the children of Israel and our forefathers—the early settlers of this favored land. They too were oppressed and afflicted, and not permitted to worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience. At

length they escaped from the land of cruel and oppressive laws, and came to this Western continent—the home which Providence had provided for them. Like the Israelites, they were sent into the wilderness to be educated, by danger and trial, for a noble destiny. Like the Israelites, they were compelled to do battle with the heathen and idolatrous tribes around them; but, like the Israelites, they were folded beneath the wing of a kind Providence. His ruling hand was as apparent in bringing our forefathers to this country, when yet a waste wilderness, and protecting them amid the perils of savage men, as it was when he led the Israelites out of Egypt and opened to them a passage through the Red Sea. If we study the features of their history, and the dealings of Divine Providence with them, we shall see how striking is the analogy, and how affectingly appropriate is the text to us as a nation. Or if we look back to the early history of this country, and contrast it with the present—if we compare its physical, political, educational, and religious aspects, *then* and *now*, we shall see how God has borne us, as on eagles' wings, and brought us to this land of heritage and blessing.

The Past and the Present then, is the theme to which we propose to call your attention. And, in the contrast and review, we hope to find abundant occasion of gratitude to God.

I. Let us, in the first place, contrast the past and present aspects of our country in a *natural* or *physical* point of view. If we go back to the landing of the Pilgrims, we see a band of heroic men and women driven by oppression from their altars and their homes in the old world. Like the Israelites, they had dared the waste of waters, the tempest and the cold, in search of a country, where God had planted the wilderness, as the place of their worship, and reared the mountain as the altar on which to offer their humble and acceptable sacrifice. They wanted no ecclesiastical architecture, no cathedral pomp of pillars and fretted vault to impress them with religious awe. The broad, all-brilliant arch of heaven was their chosen temple, and the soft gush of bird-song was music more grateful to their taste than the chanted vespers of an ignorant and idolatrous service. God had kindly sheltered their little bark, as it plowed its feeble way onward through waters, which scarcely before had bathed with foam the prow of an emigrant ship. Like a lone bird, weary and wounded with its fierce battle with the storm, that bark, deeply freighted with the fathers and mothers of a great nation, folded its sails upon a new and inhospitable coast. We see this tempest-worn ship lying there, so desolate upon the dreary shore; a few Indian fires sent up their dismal smoke in the dense forest; a few wigwams lay buried in the snows of that ever-to-be-remembered winter, but the smoke of savage fires, and the roof that sheltered savage life, afforded no hospitality to them. Years passed on—the wilderness is subdued—the bleak coast, where the sea-gull hovered in loneliness, is whitened by the sails of a thousand ships—the barren hills of New England are changed into fertile fields. But beyond

this, to the westward, was one vast wilderness, "one boundless contiguity of shade." Nature, in all her rugged wildness and beauty was there, but the music of her winds, moaning through the tall forest trees, and the thunder of her booming cataracts were unheard by the ear of civilized man. Her treasures of mineral wealth, no diviner's rod had yet discovered; her exhaustless granite lay piled up the mountain sides, as now; her rivers flowed in the same channels, they have deepened for centuries, and with the same grandeur plowed their way to the ocean; her immense inland seas spread their mirrored surface to the bright sunshine, or tossed their waves to the stormy winds and tempests; her cataracts, which now attract the admiring gaze of travelers from every distant land, raised their eternal anthem, filling the poor Indian, as he drew near with mysterious awe, lifting his thoughts up from nature to nature's God, whose glory appeared in the gorgeous rainbow which overarched the stream, whose voice was heard in the loud thunder of the falling waters, and whose resistless power was symbolized in the rushing flood, and in the hushed billows of the dark abyss. Where now wave the golden harvest-fields awaiting the sickle of the reaper, or rise the beautiful village and the crowded city, resonant with the cheerful hum of business, there stood in thick array and silent grandeur the mountain pine and the tall oaks of the forest, and there trod, in his native pride and freedom, like a lord of creation, the dusky warrior, the stoic of the wood, the man without a tear.

Our far-reaching rivers, which once were navigated only by the wild man in his bark canoe, now bear upon their bosoms floating palaces, which move like a thing of life, interchanging the intelligence and the commerce of nations.

Our western forests and prairies, but a few years since traversed only by the buffalo, the deer and the wild panther, flying before the deadly arrow of the red man, are now brought under a vigorous culture; the voice of melody and of praise has succeeded to the startling battle-cry of savage men. Surely the wilderness has been converted into a fruitful field, and the desert has been made to rejoice and "blossom as the rose."

> "Look now abroad—another race has filled
> These populous borders—wide the wood recedes,
> And towns shoot up, and fertile realms are tilled;
> The land is full of harvests and green meads:
> Streams numberless that many a fountain feeds,
> Twine, disembowered, and give to sun and breeze
> Their virgin waters."

Where once was only the wild war-path or the Indian trail, are canals and railroads, bringing the most distant points of our country into almost immediate contact; annihilating time and space; removing local prejudices and dissensions, linking different and distant parts of this Union into one grand and glorious confederacy.

Our city, which a hundred years since numbered a population only of a few thousand, now contains its hundreds of thousands, and is rapidly taking a stand among the first cities on the globe. Our fortifications, which once excited the scorn and ridicule of our enemies, have more than once humbled the scoffer, and now bid defiance to the world. Our army, in case of invasion or extraordinary emergency, though called from the work-shop and the harvest-field, are bold, formidable, and have been always victorious. "A little one has indeed become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation."

Within comparatively a short period, these changes and many more, have been wrought, showing that we have been borne as on eagles' wings, so rapid and unparalleled has been our progress. Subjects of contrast, of admiring, astonishing contrast, multiply as the mind adverts to the past and contemplates the present, causing us to live, as it were, in some fairy region, and to be the subjects of some magic agency, rather than among practical realities, the results of the ingenuity, the industry, the indomitable perseverance of man, guided however by Him, without whose blessing the wisest instrumentalities fail of success. In such a review and comparison of the past with the present, do we find no occasion for gratitude to Him, who has emphatically been the God and the guardian of this nation, who has borne us as on eagles' wings? Surely, in such a review, we must be assured that,

> "Ours is a land, of every land the pride
> Of Heaven, o'er all the world beside."

II. Let us, in the second place, contrast the past and present aspects of our country in a *political* point of view. We need not detail the circumstances of cruelty and oppression, which compelled the Puritans of England, and the Huguenots of France, to seek a refuge and a home on this Western continent. Brave, heroic, and strong in faith, committing themselves to the protection of Divine Providence, they came to lay the foundations of a new and mighty empire. In all their ways, they acknowledged God and recognized the rights of man. Religious freedom, or the right to worship God according to the dictates of an enlightened conscience, was their great and sacred motto. Religion, untrammelled by law, uncoerced by government, was the religion which they sought and were determined to enjoy. It was their high purpose to govern men by the fear of the Lord; to exhibit the precepts, apply the motives, and realize the dispositions which the Word of God inculcates and his Spirit inspires—to imbue their children, their families, and their civil polity with the wisdom which cometh from above. They had no projects of human device, no theories of untried efficacy. They hung all their hopes of civil and religious prosperity upon the Word of God and the power of his Spirit. Nor was theirs the presumptuous hope of *grace without* works. It was by training men for self-govern-

ment; it was by the diffusion of light and the spread of truth, by intellectual culture and moral influence, that they expected to enjoy and perpetuate civil liberty.

> ——————"Untamed
> To the refining subtleties of slaves,
> They brought an happy government along;
> Formed by that freedom, which, with secret voice,
> Impartial Nature teaches all her sons."

But just as they were beginning to taste the sweets of religious freedom, a threatening storm-cloud appeared. The political horizon became dark, and a heavy thunder-bolt seemed ready to fall upon their cherished and early hopes. But they were neither intimidated nor disheartened. They had been trained to meet disaster and trial. They had been educated in a school well calculated to develop the heroic, the lofty, the unbending in man. The King of England determined that the colonies should share the pecuniary burdens accumulated by the wars prosecuted during the reign of his predecessors. They resisted on the ground that the mother country had no right to tax them without their consent. They had come to this country without asking the protection of the British crown. No armed soldiery had been solicited, or sent to guard them from the attacks of savage foe. They had fought their own battles; hewed down their own forests, planted their institutions, and were struggling on to greatness, without the aid or co-operation of England. They were willing to contribute a reasonable share of means for the relief of the burdens of the mother country, but they insisted on doing it by a vote of their own legislative assemblies, in which they were fairly represented, and they appealed to the justice of the King and his Cabinet to listen to and grant their request. Their appeal was answered, only by indignity, and by an oppressive enforcement of the obnoxious enactments. The tax, in itself, was not great, but it was the *principle* which they were determined to resist. And they did resist by the force of arms, until British pride was humbled, and our independence recognized, and we took a stand, as a free people, among the nations of the earth. The prominent actors in that drama were high-minded, moral, and *religious* men, governed by the purest patriotism and love of liberty, whose *principles* were admired, even by those who condemned and opposed their acts. Seldom, if ever, has the world seen an assemblage of precisely such men. They were statesmen, as if by intuition, with minds of the highest order—intelligent, sagacious, determined in purpose, cool in action, eminently wise in counsel, brave, skillful, and undaunted in the field. It would seem as if God had raised them up purposely for the exigency, and endowed them with high qualifications for the difficult and momentous work they achieved. They were borne through the stormy scenes of the revolution, as on the wings of Divine Providence, and the same wing brooded over their counsels, when they devised and adopted our national

Constitution, an honor to their intellects and the charter of our freedom. It is republican and democratic. It recognizes the rights of the people; the right to choose their own rulers and make their own laws—the right to be heard, through their representatives, in the halls of legislation—the right to petition for a redress of grievances—the right to read their Bibles, without the restrictions of Priest or Pontiff—and the right to adopt any form of ecclesiastical government which they deem most in accordance with the Scriptures. According to our representative and republican form of government, the rulers are not the arbitrary oppressors, but the obedient servants of the people, and directly responsible to their constituents. Amid the excitement and frenzy of political debate, there is one voice to which they must listen—the voice of the people. This is the grand tribunal of our country.

Our laws are our own, and they can be altered or amended to suit the will of the people. And they are designed not to favor the few at the expense of the many. No man, be his condition what it may, can be touched in his person, his property, or his reputation, without the right to challenge the assailant and refer the issue to a process of law. No man can be punished as a criminal, until fairly tried and convicted by a jury of his country. Such is our system of free government—the best and cheapest in the world, supported by the people without feeling the pecuniary pressure. It is also safe and practicable. We are now in the seventy-fifth year of our national independence, and we are still borne on eagles' wings. We are not going to decay. We may have sectional jealousies, and strong conflicts of interest and opinion, but the wings of our eagle will soar aloft to a calmer region amid the plaudits of the people. They love their country, her constitution and her laws, and are ready to forego any local advantage for the sake of preserving the Union. And as for foreign interposition, we have passed beyond the peradventure of peril or defeat. Let any five of the strong monarchies of Europe combine to subvert the liberties of this country, and attach us to some foreign crown, and you would see the spectacle of a people coming up to the work, shoulder to shoulder, absolutely *wild* under the power of national enthusiasm, ready to steep the soil with their blood, and make the whole heavens ring with the thunder of arms. The experiment would involve a development of our character never to be forgotten in the annals of the human race, that, in its grandeur and awfulness, would seem fresh after the lapse of a thousand years. This people love their government, love their free institutions; it is a broad, deep, intelligent love. Set this people down in the heart of Russia, and the old monarch would tremble upon his throne. The very Cossacks and serfs of the soil would burn with the inspiration of freemen. The spirit of liberty, kindled in this country, has already gone across the waters. It has entered France, Italy, and Hungary; it beats *in the bosoms of* millions, and though the bolt of every chain

has again been driven, yet the despots of Europe can no more hold the heaving mass, than the chains of Xerxes could hold the Hellespont, vexed with storms. Floods have been poured upon the rising flame, but they can no more extinguish it, than they can extinguish the fires of Ætna. Still it burns, and still the mountain heaves and murmurs, and soon it will explode with voices, and thunderings, and earthquakes. Then will the trumpet of jubilee sound, and earth's oppressed millions will leap from the dust and shake off their chains, thrilled with ecstacies and ideas of freedom! The world is hastening to such a destiny, and our land is cheering the nations on in their struggle for universal emancipation. There is but one voice that adds discord to the music of our applause, and that is the voice of three millions of human beings, in the very heart of this country, crying aloud for freedom!

III. Let us, in the third place, contrast the past and present aspects of our country in an *educational* point of view. I design to use the term education in a very generic sense, implying the progress and improvement made in the sciences and arts for the past hundred years. New and important discoveries have been made in astronomy, enlarging our conceptions of the heavenly bodies, filling our minds with sublimer views of the Divine Being—in natural philosophy, developing its latent principles for the comfort and convenience of man—in botany, giving every flower and shrub a meaning and a voice—in geology, bringing its every newly discovered fact and feature to harmonize with revealed truth—in electricity, that mysterious agent, which seems to bid defiance to all power, save the infinite and the boundless. What a wonderful triumph of art is that invention, which carries thought along the regions of the atmosphere with the rapidity of lightning, and with all the accuracy of typography! It seems more like a dream of romance than sober reality. We can scarcely realize that our country has become, as it were, one great speaking gallery, where a whisper is heard from one extremity of the land to the other, almost as soon as uttered. The application of steam to mechanical and commercial purposes, is comparatively a recent discovery, and yet who is not amazed at the perfection it has already reached? Rivers are navigated against wind and current—the ocean bridged—mines explored—the most massive machinery moved—manual labor and the labor of beasts of burden, to a great extent, superseded by this wonder-working agent, now under the control and made to facilitate the movements, add to the convenience, and give success to the enterprises of man. In all the higher branches of education, progress has distinguished the past; and in common school education, how amazing has been the change! One hundred years ago, how limited were the facilities for learning and improvement! The common school system, which is now the ornament and glory of our country, had not been natured and adopted. Our forefathers felt the want and took early steps to meet it. It had been the policy of the land of their birth to keep the masses in ignorance; they deter-

mined that the land of their adoption should be characterized by a different and wiser policy. Hence, no sooner was the foundation-stone of the church laid, than the school house and the college arose, and the patron of piety was also the patron of learning. There was no talk of sects, nor parties, but of *union*—the union of hearts that loved God and throbbed with a holy pulsation for posterity and the race. Since then, we have been borne on eagles' wings.

Colleges and common schools have been planted everywhere throughout the land. They are free and open to all. No barriers are thrown around their threshold; no sect, nor creed, nor wealth, nor aristocratic pride can claim pre-eminence here. Our colleges, unlike the proud and moss-covered universities of the East, seek no solitude and embowering shades and seclusion, like reputed orbs of glory, viewless from the immense clouds, but as open suns and stars leading on and cheering every one in his pursuit after knowledge.

The first thing which strikes a traveler, as he enters the old world, is the immense soldiery, that everywhere meet his eye. Why are these stationed at every corner and nook of the land? Not to protect the rights of the many, but to guard the rulers from the people, and keep their crowns well balanced upon their heads. We, on the contrary, can point to our common schools, and say, "These are our standing army, the grand palladium of our liberties." It has ever been the policy of despotism, whether civil or religious, to monopolize knowledge, to enslave the popular understanding, and thus to hold the great mass of humanity passive and quiet. This is one of the great difficulties in the way of popular government in Europe. The truth is, the people, as a people, are not sufficiently intelligent for this purpose. In a sudden burst of passion, they may shake down a throne, but either they will go into anarchy, which is far worse, or some proud remnant of fallen greatness, chosen in the fury of popular excitement, will soon impose chains, perhaps golden chains, yet *real* chains, upon the delighted captives—*the people*. Look at France, her peasantry too republican for monarchy, too ignorant for a republic! See 100,000 soldiers stationed in Paris to keep the people from destroying their own government. See 30,000 Republicans sail into Italy to put down a republic, and at the point of the bayonet re-establish the most accursed system of ecclesiastical and civil despotism, which ever enslaved and degraded man! We see no such scenes enacted in this country, and, for the simple reason, that the laboring classes, those who control the ballot-box, are intelligent, and know how to appreciate civil liberty and the rights of man. True we have ignorance here, but it is mostly imported. Our native population, our farmers, our mechanics, our merchants, for the most part, are a thinking, reading, intelligent population. And our peculiar institutions, our common school system, *free to the poorest*, have made them such. "But still," says a foreign critic, "how exceedingly raw you appear in this

country; everything lies in the rough; your blunt manners, your provincialisms, all your ideas need to be taken across the waters to a planing-machine." This is the impression and the language of some, who look only at the surface of things, who are fascinated with the tinsel and glitter of royalty. But if we have not all the external polish, which adorns the more favored circles of Europe, we have intelligence more generally diffused, scattered, like the sun's radiance, over the masses of the people. England has always been able to boast of some tall pillars of intellectual light, but they have only made the surrounding gloom and darkness the more impressively visible. Our plan is to have a large number of *fair* men, who can do their own thinking, and do it well. Once in a while, we produce a great man, to let the world know what we are capable of doing. Such men we have, and such we have always had, and they will not suffer in comparison with the greatest men of the old world. But we prefer to kindle up a great many lights, which, like the thickly scattered lamps of a city, illumine every street and alley. This is our plan, and it is the best one on the earth. I want no country or system that finishes up a few men, called *noblemen*, and leave the great mass of men in the rust. I prefer to distribute this polish, to have it a little less concentrated, so that common people can get at it and share in the lustre. Who would pour all the light of the sun through a gas-pipe, for the sake of having one bright spot? Or who would think of making one tremendous bonfire, to excite the gaze of the collected throng, rather than kindle a fire on every man's hearth-stone? This is what our system of education is aiming to do—to diffuse light over the great multitude, who hold the destinies of this country at their own disposal—to bring every man's conscience under the power of truth and the grace of God. This is our plan for preserving the Union, and perpetuating the institutions for which our fathers shed their blood.

IV. Let us, in the fourth place, contrast the past and present aspects of our country in a *religious* point of view. If we compare Europe with our own country, we do virtually contrast the past with the present; for her institutions are stereotyped; what *was*, is *now*, and the evils which our forefathers suffered are the legitimate and necessary evils resulting from a union of Church and State. In England, where monarchy exists in its mildest form, Episcopacy is the reigning type of Christianity. The Queen is the visible head of the church. She appoints the archbishops, who, in virtue of their ecclesiastical office, are members of the House of Lords, mingling in the heat and strife of political debate, receiving an income of from 15 to £20,000 a year, the owners of palaces, and yet, *the successors of the apostles!* They move amid the most splendid circles of gayety and fashion, and on retiring from Parliament, administer, within their baronial precincts, an extended patronage, appoint their bishops, wield an absolute sceptre over the inferior clergy, and by an indefinite prerogative awe and control the laity, who are taxed to oppression to support this pon-

derous hierarchy. Can the fruits of the Spirit flourish in such a soil? Like the deadly Upas, this wide-spreading tree casts its pestiferous shade over bishops, curates, pastors, and people.

The bad effects of this union are thus described by one who has recently left the establishment. "The church and the world are completely fused at the table of the Lord. The theaters, the ball-rooms, and the race courses, may pour their whole contents into the assemblies of communicants, and be welcomed by the churches as members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. Believers are yoked together with unbelievers; the righteous with the unrighteous; the worshipers of Christ with the worshipers of Belial. Men of a schismatical spirit, who cast out their brethren, fierce successors of Diotrephes, violating the law of charity with shameless party zeal, kneel side by side with Christ's disciples at the altar, from which the most estimable and faithful brethren of dissenting churches are rudely excluded. The covetous, the railer, and even those who are generally thought to be fornicators and drunkards, may take their place at the Lord's table as easily as in their pew. Pastors who are ignorant, and even irreligious, remain under the sanction of law to misrepresent the gospel and mislead the congregation:" and yet the people are compelled to support them.

The evils of this union of Church and State are much more apparent in all Papal countries, where the Pope is the universal sovereign, to whom kings and emperors render a servile homage, and where millions of ignorant and degraded subjects are utter strangers to personal and political freedom. The Pope appears as the embodied reality of that prophetic delineation of the "Man of Sin," which is given by the apostle, when he says, "He opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." He sits as an arbiter over the human conscience, the infallible judge of right and wrong, and from his decision there is no appeal. The church, under his jurisdiction, is alike infallible, and her dogmas and decisions ultimate and binding. And though she may teach the most strange and unscriptural doctrines—that the Virgin Mary, instead of Jesus, is "a mediator between God and men,"—that the humble confession of a penitent to God, like that of the Publican, is unavailing, unless breathed first privately into the ears of a Romish priest,—that the dead are not only subjects of prayer, but that they can be so deified by canonization, as to be objects of prayer, — that the probability of a man's escape from purgatory depends upon the amount of money which his friends are willing to pay for masses to be said in Latin for his soul, and that the eternal and immutable law of God, which sweeps over a universe and an eternity, the embodied transcript of Divine purity and glory, is so accommodating, that it can be safely set aside, if the Pope sees fit to grant, as he has often granted, a plenary indulgence to sin, — these doctrines are taught by the church, and having all the enginery of

the State at her disposal, her arguments are often the agonies of the dungeon, or the flames of martyrdom. She stoutly denies the right to question her infallibility. Whenever her errors of doctrine, or corruptions in practice, have been exposed, she has silenced their arguments by brute force. When they brought to light the scandalous immoralities of her clergy, she punished them, as slanderers, with the sword. When they sought permission to live and act according to the Word of God, she handed them over to the tender mercies of the inquisition. We cannot forget that it was the church of Rome which slaughtered the Waldenses, the Albigenses, and other Christians, before the Reformation, and the Huguenots of France, and the Scottish and Irish Protestants since. Inspired prophecy describes her as the "woman drunken with the blood of saints," as "the mystery of iniquity;" and the history of her cruelties fully justifies the prophetic declaration.

This union of Church and State is both corrupting and persecuting — it corrupts the state and it corrupts the church — it corrupts the subjects and functionaries of both — it forms a *union* of tyrannies—a conspiracy of popes and kings to enslave a race; the former determining what is true by authority, the latter coercing assent and both robbing human nature of its dearest rights. If any struggle for liberty, they are met by the spear of kings and the thunders of the Vatican. This is the double iron yoke, under which mankind have groaned for centuries.

Happily, in this country, it has no reality. In the very infancy of our existence the Protestant principle took deep root in this wild soil. The tree once planted, was watered with prayers, with the tears of hearts made desolate by violence and oppression, with the blood of martyrs freely shed in resisting tyranny. Our forefathers, the framers of this government, instructed by the terrible lessons of the past, fully conceived the idea of a church not dependent on the state, whose internal economy might be left to herself, whose progress is in proportion to the power of truth and the grace of God in converting sinners. No one sect is preferred above another, for none are known, as such, in the government, the influences of moral causes arbitrating their destiny. The immense blessing consequent, it is hardly possible to appreciate, or for it to be sufficiently thankful. Think of an exemption from the great evils incident to a union of church and state. Think of the style of character which an independent church must necessarily beget or sink into decay. Having no adventitious and false life, she must live in herself, by faith alone, or perish. She has no lordly revenues, no gorgeous ritual, no pomp of external service with which to encourage the hopes or foster the pride of worldly men. She has no civil powers to abuse, no bribes to receive or to extend. She can affect the state only as she affects individuals, by the light of her piety and the power of truth. An educated and devoted ministry — a good character, sound doctrine, and the promise of the Spirit, are her only patrimony. "The weapons of her warfare are not carnal, but mighty to the pulling down of strong holds."

Such is the religion of this country. It has blessed it from the beginning. It constitutes the corner-stone of our American Republic. It permeates our civil polity and all our free institutions. It is thoroughly *Protestant* in its character. It is this principle which has stimulated enterprise and made our land what it is — the glory of all lands. It is not because of our origin, not because the Anglo-Saxon blood flows in our veins — it is not because of the extent of our territory, or the fertility of our soil, or even because of the excellence of our institutions, that the wings of our eagle are poised far above every other nation on the globe. It is because we are *Protestants.* We have indeed a better government than Austria, because we have a better people; but our Protestant religion has made them better. Take away our religion and you introduce a despotism, or the anarchy which makes it necessary.

Our country is *Protestant;* the men who laid the foundation of its greatness were Protestants, and their mantle has fallen upon their children. And though we have different ecclesiastical organizations, and different forms of worship, we all rally to the Protestant standard. Here we stand on one broad and brotherly foundation, with hearts thoroughly responsive to the great principles of the reformation. We have a "Christian Alliance," which embraces in its fraternal union the Protestants of the world! Let this be known throughout the dominions of the Pope, and it will hush the shout of triumph, which Romanists are disposed to raise over our fancied disunion and anticipated fall. No man, who has marked the Providence which has borne us, as a nation, thus far on eagle's wings, can believe "that we have been led out of Egypt to fall by the Amorites."

If now and then you see a recreant from Protestantism, taking the backward track towards Rome and the dark ages, with affinities leaning in the direction of the mitre, the crosier, and the chair of St. Peter, vacated by the uprising of the spirit of the age, think not that we are becoming Papists in this country. No, Protestantism is the deep, firm, fixed form of the religious sentiment in this land. It is a sentiment in harmony with our institutions, the offspring of thought and free inquiry, guided by the teachings of revealed truth. It does not go by authority, dogmatic, simply, because it is old; oppressive, because it has the disposition and the power; gaping and moping in indolent stupor over obsolete and exploded wisdom. It goes by the light of truth, the power of thought, and the impelling wants of millions perishing in ignorance and sin. It operates in a very simple and practical way. Warm up a man with the current religion of this country, and he will not dream of hunting for truth in the musty records of ancient convents, and there simmering his piety over the flame of a passive holiness. Neither will he think that a surplice, all silken and white, is necessary to symbolize the bright and pure light of his inner experience. Neither will he cry out for a cathedral, with images of departed saints, crucifixes of gold, and altars of ivory.

But his cry will be, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Labor for the glory of God and the welfare of man will be the absorbing thought of his inquiring mind. Practical benevolence and not a passive sentimentalism marks the Protestant type of piety. It invents and applies instrumentalities for doing good, for removing oppressive burdens, for diffusing light, for facilitating the progress and happiness of our race. To use a figure; it is a tree, rooted in the soil of gospel truth, on whose trunk hang the branches of benevolence, pouring the strong life — giving sap into all their leaves and flowers — lifting its boughs so high and spreading them so far, that the pendant fruit may drop on all the world. Such is Protestant Christianity — the Christianity of this country, and destined to spread its hallowing influence over the entire globe. The eyes of all nations are now turned to us — the hopes of the world, under God, are dependent upon our exertions. We occupy the vantage ground of an immeasurable superiority for striking a blow for the downfall of error, and the triumph of truth. The grandeur of our destiny, and the prominent position we are to occupy in the conversion of the world, are scarcely appreciated or understood. Wherever our history is read, or the epic of our life is sung, *there* America has power—the power of a moral influence that will touch with electric rapidity the very heart of nations, and galvanize into vitality the dead forms of an ignorant and antiquated worship.

Evarts, before he went to his reward, published a paper entitled "The Moral Destiny of the United States," in which, he showed from safe calculations, that in one hundred and seventy years, the population of this land would be swelled to one thousand millions! The growth of our country since proves its probable truth. We double our population once in twenty-five years. Think of a people possessing the elements, physical, intellectual, and moral, to which we have referred, increasing for two centuries, and how amazing is the responsibility of our position! For what a career prepared and preparing! To what a destiny tending! Ah! I love my country. There is more in this land to love than in any other beneath the sun. I love my God, who gave it, and the memory of our fathers who bled for it.

"Lives there a man with soul so dead,
Who ne'er within himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land?"

We believe our country is destined to survive the disasters that may yet await it; like a proud promontory, whose base is in the deep, whose summit reaches the clouds; the drifting storms may strike upon its breast, the fretful ocean may dash upon its base; but it will stand as a beacon to the multitudes afar off—the home of liberty, and an asylum for the oppressed of all nations. We turn an incredulous ear to the cry of political alarmists about the dissolution of the Union. We are still sheltered by the wing of a kind Providence, and under auspices divine, if we are true to our

principles, we shall yet achieve a sublime destiny. Let pious patriotism take down her suspended and silent harp, and on this day of public congratulation, cheer the world with the melody of strains.* Let God be praised from land to land, and from sea to sea. Let the song rise and swell, waxing louder and sweeter till it be lost in that great hymn chanted in the abodes of light.

Thus, my brethren, have I endeavored to set the past and present aspects of our country, in contrast before you. We have seen that progress has been made, in the physical, the political, the educational, and religious condition of our country; that we have been borne as on eagle's wings; that our land is full of interest and encouragement, to the nations struggling for freedom and light. But it may be asked; is not this strain of congratulation ill-timed? Are not the hopes of the world wrapped in gloom? Has not the past year been one of reaction and discouragement? True, France has disappointed the hopes of freemen. Italy has struggled in vain; yet not in vain. Rome has fallen, and the Pope, like a vulture, awaits the last struggle of the victim, to gorge himself on the remains of the child of republicanism. Hungary, alas for her; she has fallen a prey to the Northern Bear and the eagles of Hapsburgh. Germany awakes from the dream of unity to find herself in the perfidious hands of Frederick William and Joseph. The pall of death seems to have settled down again on Europe, and the voice of freedom seems hushed to silence. This, however, is a partial and limited view. It leaves out of sight the purpose of God and the power of that Spirit which is abroad among the nations of the earth. The giant Liberty is not dead, but only slumbers to recruit his energies for a more vigorous and successful effort.

Let evangelical light and truth be diffused: Let the Protestant principle work like leaven among the masses of the people. Let this be done and a foundation well laid, on which, popular rights and free institutions may stand forever. Until *it is done*, the upheavings of society and the throes of humanity will be, like the tossing fires of a volcano, to fall back again into the crater of passion and crime, or to overflow with the burning lava only to devastate and destroy. While then, we review the past, let us be prepared to meet the exigencies of the present, and anticipate a glorious future all radiant with the light of prophecy, and glowing with the full and finished purposes of Him, "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, and to whom, the kingdoms of this world are given in covenant as the reward of his sufferings, and the trophies of his victory."

* Thanksgiving Day.

THE

AMERICAN

NATIONAL PREACHER.

A

REPOSITORY OF ORIGINAL SERMONS,

FROM

LIVING MINISTERS OF THE UNITED STATES.

EDITED BY REV. F. C. WOODWORTH.

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* Corresponding with previous volumes.

THE

NATIONAL PREACHER.

I.

GOD'S MORAL SYSTEM, SUPERIOR TO THE MATERIAL.

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PASTOR OF THE CHURCH OF THE PILGRIMS, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

"And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail."—LUKE xvi. 17.

THE conception of the Material System is naturally accompanied in the mind by the impression of its permanence. Even the child perceives the solidity and hardness of the objects that surround him; and their power at once so absolutely to uphold and to restrict him, may well seem the evidence of their necessary duration. And as he comes to understand more fully the extent, and structure, and the history of the system, this first impression is naturally confirmed. As he learns how vast the Earth is,—not bounded by the horizon as he supposed, but bearing upon its mighty bosom islands, and realms, and empires, and continents even, with fathomless oceans poured round them as their drapery; as he examines the physical structure of the earth, and drives his drill into the granite bars that lock and interlock beneath its surface, or traces the ridges of rock and iron that stretch across it as its ribs of strength; as he follows backward the many generations that in succession have lived and labored upon its globe, and feels how changeless it has been through all their changes,—how absolutely it is now the same as when the Roman eagles traversed its surface, as when the temple of the Sun was standing in Palmyra, as when the hundred-gated Thebes stretched its stupendous front along the Nile; nay, as passing backward from even this computation he learns through what vast cycles and periods, and into what remote, impenetrable abysses, the researches of the naturalist seem to carry its duration:—and most of all, as rising from this view of the Earth, he learns to comprehend in some degree the magnitude of the System in which it is but part,

and of that more sublime and awful structure in which our System itself is but a distant and unimportant province, the vestibule to the Temple;—at each ascending step in this great series, the involuntary belief of the *permanence* of the Universe, still gathers within him; the possibility of its dissolution seems unreal and incredible; and practically he feels, and he acts on the belief, that the pillars of Heaven shall *not* tremble, and the foundations of the Earth shall never be removed.

And this is a conviction against which argument seems vain. Science may teach him that there are forces at work whose tendency is to the destruction of the System. Astronomical records may show him that these forces have been disastrously active in the ages that are gone. A searching philosophy may even discover to him that where there is mutation there is not self-originated and necessary existence; and that therefore all the changes in the earth are so many evidences of its dependence upon sustaining power, and so many signs and marks of its probable dissolution. And Revelation may speak, with her authoritative voice, proclaiming the actual origin of the worlds, and their continued support by the hand of their Creator; showing that what we call the laws of nature are really but modes in which God acts, and therefore are liable to be at any moment suspended or reversed by his volition. And yet, in spite of all, it is the practical conviction,—that upon which we act even unconsciously,—that this so solid earth on which we tread is *permanent;* that the infinite cope which arches above our heads as gloriously as when the shepherds watched it upon the plain of Shinar, must stand securely; and that, though here and there a part may fail, to crush the whole into nothingness would almost surpass the capacity of Omnipotent force.

It is therefore a striking and remarkable declaration which is recorded in the text; a declaration which grows upon us as we consider it, and which opens before us still wider views: that it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than for one tittle of the law to fail. Clearly, and most impressively, it teaches us THE ETERNITY OF GOD'S MORAL LAW, AND ITS SUPREMACY IN THE UNIVERSE. By no other mode of expression, by no other comparison or image, could this truth have been more vividly expressed, or more emphatically affirmed; and it is this, of course, which I shall now consider. It is the essential Permanence of the Divine Law, and, as connected with this, the essential Supremacy of the whole Moral System above the Material, which I would bring as a reality to your thoughts this morning.

My first remark is, in connection with it:

I. THAT THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DIVINE LAW ARE ESSENTIALLY PERMANENT; ARE PERMANENT AND IMMUTABLE IN THEIR OWN NATURE.

That they are principles of truth and of rectitude, need not be argued. They are recognized as such, by the Conscience in the soul. They are shown to be such, by the fact that God proclaims

them. They are established as such, by the express and manifold declarations of Scripture.

And as the principles of Right and Truth, they are, in their very nature, unchangeable and everlasting. This is a point which it is difficult, perhaps, to prove; but only because in the effort to prove it is involved its assumption. It is, of course, impossible to construct an argument for any purpose, which shall not presuppose, as its primary basis, the *reliableness of reasoning*. But manifestly no reasoning can be reliable, unless the principles of truth are permanent and immutable; unless they are fixed, not arbitrarily, by a decree from without which is liable at any time to be revoked, but inherently, as in their nature eternally the same. So, too, it is impossible to judge the attributes of Right, without assuming its existence, as an absolute verity, to which these attributes indissolubly pertain; and thus we cannot demonstrate its eternity, without tacitly presupposing it. In relation to the proposition announced, therefore, it is as true as it seems paradoxical, that the difficulty of proving it is an evidence of its truth. It is not to be established by argument, simply because it is a primary fact, lying back of all argument, and to be practically assumed in order to furnish a foundation for argument.

But though we may not logically demonstrate the absolute permanence of the Truth and the Right, we have evidence of that permanence which is entirely conclusive. And that evidence is, in part, the immediate cognizance of the fact by the soul, and its more full and clear perception and more decisive affirmation of it, as it rises in nobleness, becomes more open and alive to spiritual impression, and more conversant with the Truth whose nature it considers. It is the prerogative of the soul, not merely to reason correctly from established premises, but at certain points to rise thus above reasoning, in the establishment of its premises; and to perceive intuitively those axioms in thought, those principles of truth, which precede argument, and in their nature transcend it; which, though beyond the grasp of the mere understanding,

> "Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,
> Are yet a master-light of all our seeing."

And in relation to these truths, the decision of the soul is as thoroughly to be trusted, it *is* as implicitly relied upon in practical concerns, as when its conclusions are the result of an obvious analysis. Indeed, its belief in these truths seems higher, even, and more affirmative, than in any others; because it partakes of the nature of vision, as distinguished from conviction; because in its perception of these, the soul acts, if we may so express it, in the totality of its powers; not merely in the use of the argumentative understanding. It is thus, for example, with the indestructible belief of the soul in its own personality; a belief out of which it cannot be forced, which is absolute knowledge more than belief, and yet which is not

the result of any process of reasoning, and for which it can scarcely give a reason when that is asked. It is thus, too, with its belief in the reality of moral distinctions and moral obligation. And it is thus with its belief in the inherent reality, and the unchangeable permanence, of the Truth and the Right. It is not a prejudice of the soul, which leads it to feel this. It is not any previous education, that it has unconsciously received. Certainly it is not an unsuspected pressure of its inherited depravity. Its perception of the fact is intuitive and immediate. It believes it, because it cannot but believe it; because it sees it to be true; because the conviction of its truth is made irresistible by its own constitution.

This, therefore, is one of the points at which all candid and thoughtful minds meet in agreement, whatever have been their differences of culture, or the peculiar aspects of their previous history. All feel, the educated and the ignorant, the aged and the immature, even the virtuous and the vicious—*all* feel, when the point is distinctly presented to them, and except as they have previously been biassed against it—that there is an Absolute Truth which can never become Error, and an Absolute Right which can by no agency be transmuted into Wrong. They know, when they think of it clearly, that a truth is in its nature, eternally, a truth; not dependent for its truthfulness upon outward circumstances, nor upon any, even Divine, appointment; but a truth always, and everywhere, because a truth inherently and by nature; and that no events can ever occur, and no exertion of power can ever be made, which shall falsify a principle that is true in itself. The axiom, for example, in mathematics, that the whole is greater than the part, or that the equals of a given quantity are equal to each other; or the proposition in morals, that the same act cannot at the same time be wholly right and wholly wrong, or that it is not possible at the same moment to love supremely two objects of regard, essentially diverse; these principles, and such as these, it is universally felt, must be always true. They do not depend for their truth on any appointment, and no power in the universe could change them into error.

And the same is characteristic of the principles of Right. A particular volition, or exertion of force, may of course be right at one time and wrong at another; because at one time performed with one motive and for a particular end, and at another time with another motive and for a different end. But the *principles* of Right, and the great duties to which these principles give rise, toward God and toward his creatures, are ALWAYS THE SAME. They *cannot* change. They are independent, entirely, of outward events. Their rightness is inherent, and universal. Across all boundaries of space or time, their obligation sweeps. They grow out of the nature of things. They are involved in the primary laws of Being itself. They have their origin in the same eternal necessities, which constitute the ground of the existence of Deity;

and they are, therefore, themselves immutable and everlasting; not dependent for their authority on any enactment, and not to be reversed by any decree. Their authority extends to all moral beings, as such; to the Creator himself, as truly as to the creature. To deal justly, to love mercy, in all things to regard the truth and to maintain equity—this, with reverence be it said, it is right for God himself to do. It is so independently of his volition, and has been so eternally; and it would be wrong for him to refuse it. And it is just the glory of his character, not that he makes that right which was not so before, or that by his election he has sovereignly divided the right from the wrong, but that he has freely chosen the Right, which was so *in itself*, as the rule of his action; and has made it the rule for the action of his creatures.

And this, if we consider it carefully, is everywhere involved in Scripture. It is because the word of the Lord is true and good, that it endureth forever; i. e., of course, because it is conformed with the truth and penetrated by the goodness, which are changeless and absolute. It is because the ways of Jehovah are ways of righteousness,—because, in other words, they are agreeable to the rectitude which is perfect and everlasting,—that saints and angels rejoice in his sovereignty. And that in his character which fills with brightness the heavenly courts, and lifts into their loftiest anthems the hearts of Saints, is simply its immutable expression of rectitude and of truth.

Before the worlds were, therefore, the Right was, and the Truth with it; coeval with God himself, the principles of his character and the guides of his action. No lapse of time impairs their perfectness. No reach of space surpasses their authority. They are invulnerable to assault. They have their roots in the very ground of Existence, and they cannot be changed by any power. And, literally, "it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than for one tittle of the law to fail." Though all animated existence should perish from the Earth, though life itself should cease throughout the universe, though all the bands of the Creation should be dissolved, and worlds and systems fly wildly into chaos,

> "The bright sun be extinguished, and the stars
> Wander forth darkling in the eternal space,
> Rayless and pathless, and the icy earth
> Swing blind and blackening, in the moonless air,"

still would the principles of Right remain unchanged, through all mutations; eternal in themselves, and indestructible; and just as evident in their nature, and just as absolute in their sway, when other suns and systems, through other agencies, had risen in splendor upon the wreck of these.

And this brings me to my second remark, which is:

II. That THE ENACTMENT OF THESE PRINCIPLES UPON THE PART OF GOD, AS THE RULE OF CONDUCT FOR HIMSELF AND FOR HIS

CREATURES, is as permanent and unchangeable as are the principles themselves.

We may distinguish, evidently, and we must distinguish, between the principles of the law,—the principles of equity and truth developed therein,—and the Law itself as a specific enactment, enjoined for us, on the part of our lawgiver. The principles, as we have seen, are self-existent and immutable. We cannot, without absurdity, even conceive these to be changed. But it is entirely conceivable in itself, without reference to the character of God, that the expression of these principles, in the statute revealed, may be essentially changed. It remains to be considered, therefore, whether there is a liability to this; or whether the Rule of Conduct recognized by the conscience, and addressed to us in the Scriptures,—around which are summoned their promises and penalties, and to which is given the authority of Jehovah,—is also as changeless as the principles it enfolds.

And it is to just this point that the Saviour speaks, and this he decides by the announcement of the text. In this sense, also, the Law is permanent. It rests upon an appointment entirely immutable; and it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than for one tittle of it to tremble or fail.

The certainty of this will become apparent, if we remember that the law embraces perfectly the principles of right, and that the character of the Deity is of unchangeable perfection. If the Divine Law were an imperfect embodiment of truth and equity, the very goodness and holiness of Jehovah would require its amendment. It would then be, not only wrong in itself, but mischievous in its influence; as even an earthly and local statute, if unjust, is always mischievous, within the circle of its effects. The high regard of God for his Creation, therefore, as well as his supreme regard for Right, would demand and necessitate a change in the law. That infinite goodness and wisdom, which hold the worlds upon their course, from age to age, without one jar or tremble in all their sweep, would never be satisfied with a spiritual law, wrong in its elements and destructive in its effect upon the moral creation. Its change or abolition would be as certain as his sovereignty. But, manifestly, precisely the reverse is true, the law being holy. As it expresses fully the principles of rectitude—as in itself, therefore, it is absolutely equitable, and in its influences unspeakably beneficent—both the holiness and the goodness of the Deity ensure its stability. Holiness, is regard for the Right considered in itself and its own nature, and aside from its tendencies to produce well-being. Benevolence, is regard for that well-being which Right produces; and which, as matter of fact, can only be permanently attained through its instrumentality. The two, obviously, are nowise incompatible. Rather, they are sympathetic and friendly, and intrinsically allied; and though properly distinguishable, they are naturally coincident. We see them manifested,

both separately and in union, in the character of those who in this world are worthy of our regard. It is their immutable development, and their absolute union, in the character of Jehovah, which gives to that its highest grandeur—a grandeur in the comparison of which the sublimity of God's Eternity is poor and low. God is "glorious in holiness." He is infinite, also, in mercy and in goodness. He loves the Right for its own sake; for its inherent and ineradicable beauty; for its eternal excellence;—and to the maintenance of that Right, and the advancement of its interests and the securing of its triumph, he cheerfully sacrifices all transient interests. Yet he loves also the welfare of the Universe, and for it he makes constant exertion; for it he gave his Son to die, and puts forth mightily his whole omnipotence. And he sees clearly, in his omniscient vision searching all things, how closely this well-being so precious in itself, is bound up with the Right so excellent and authoritative; how absolutely inseparable the two are; and how immutably it is certain, that only as equity is maintained can welfare be secured; that only as holiness prevails will happiness go with it. And therefore, in every aspect, he loves His Law, which is the Expression of the Right, and the Instrument of the Welfare; and in the obedience of which lie holiness and peace. He loves, and will maintain it.

In relation to these its elements, of holiness and goodness, the character of the Deity is altogether unchangeable. His very power and Godhead are not more permanent. It is not possible for him to lie. He is not compelled, indeed, to be holy, by any external necessity. He is not shut up to benevolence in spite of himself. For such a conception would be as self-contradictory and as inherently absurd, as it would be derogatory to the glory of his character. His holiness is a voluntary holiness. His goodness is an attribute of his Will, which is inherently free. And yet the certainty of their continuance is not susceptible of increase. It is not apparent to us, even, how any *motive* can be presented to God for deviation from rectitude! how any temptation to malevolence can be felt in his bosom! But whether this be so or not, the certainty is entire of his unchangeable purity. His very nature involves it. The Scriptures most clearly and frequently declare it. And it is not more certain that his existence is limitless, than that his character will retain its original glory; will be pervaded and signalized by love and holiness, throughout eternity. The power that fills with worlds the infinite void, shall be controlled through all its stretches by boundless love. The knowledge to which Immensity is present, and all the past, and all the future; we in our ignorance; the insect of a day that flutters by us; the very clods beneath our feet; and all the infinite ranks of Principalities and Powers, ascending from us,—by which all acts are noted, and through which all thoughts are visible to God;—this knowledge, so measureless and incomprehensible, shall,

through eternity be only the minister of a holiness, before which angels shall bow and veil their faces. There is a Temple standing eternally in Heaven; and "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts," will be ever the song of the Seraphim therein. There are harps strung upon the sea of glass, and from them shall be poured forever the same triumphant anthem: "Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of Saints." We lift ourselves into a realm of thought, from which the eye flies out into the limitless expanses of the eternal Future; and still we see therein only the beauty of God's Goodness, the glory of his Truth, streaming across, and spreading up, and filling with their light the infinite Concave. Taking our stand upon that jutting crag which Inspiration shows, lifting its head in the Hereafter, around which are dissolving elements, stars falling from their places, and these our heavens all vanishing in the flame; —still, as we look before us, we see goodness and holiness, serenely beautiful, sublimely radiant; and to our listening ear, from out the furthest recesses of the interminable Future, the echo that comes up is one of PRAISE.

Here, then, we see the Permanence of the Law! Not only are its principles immutable in themselves, but as a distinct enactment, ordained by our Sovereign as our rightful Rule, its authority is unchangeable, and its dominion everlasting. It was given in the holiness of Jehovah; and while that holiness abides, it will remain. It is sustained and enforced by his boundless goodness; and till that goodness becomes malevolence, its dominion cannot fail. Through all eternity, therefore, it will be still GOD'S LAW! amended by no addition, superseded by no revocation. The heavens and the earth may pass away. In the progress of ages, they *must* depart; for in themselves they have no life, and when God's purpose in them has been accomplished, they vanish of necessity. The whole material System shall roll together as a scroll; for it is all constructed for a specific end, and when that end is realized its mission is fulfilled. Vast, therefore, as are the periods of its duration, they are not INFINITE. Laboriously as we must struggle up, to comprehend the almost measureless expanses through which *they* shall endure, still do these sink into the utterest insignificance, into the littleness of a day, beside that absolute ETERNITY through which God's Moral Law shall still abide—cöeval in its principles with the existence of Deity, cöeval in its enactment with the Immortality of the Soul. Oh! in the light of this, we scarcely need the declarations of the Scripture; we know, almost beforehand, from the nature of the Law and from the character of Jehovah, "that the word of our God shall stand forever:" that "though the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, the Salvation of God shall be forever, and his Righteousness shall not be abolished." "It is easier—verily, it is EASIER—for heaven and earth to pass, than for one tittle of the Law to fail."

And now, there are two or three thoughts suggested by the sub-

ject. It shows us, first, WHAT IS THE HIGHEST DEPARTMENT IN THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT.

It is the MORAL. It is that in which this perfect and immutable Law is perfectly applied, by a holy Sovereign, to spiritual beings. In this, the ends proposed are in themselves the highest; the interests involved, of greatest magnitude; the means employed, most diverse and most noble; and the manifestations made, of power and knowledge as well as of wisdom and goodness, most various and sublime. Creation, rightly considered, necessarily implies only the putting forth of adequate force. Connected with it there may be, as there have been in our material system, most signal displays of skill and goodness; and yet the objects affected, if we may so express it, are gross and passive; the means employed are absolutely simple; the ends attained are for a time. But in the Moral government of Jehovah—that government whose Law the Saviour was describing—the subjects affected are spiritual beings, free and immortal; the agencies employed, are agencies of motive, and means of grace and spiritual influence; the requisitions made, on every moral attribute, are far more large; and the ends to be attained—the maintenance of the Right, the bringing of all beings to its joyful obedience, and thus the highest well-being of the moral Creation, and the sublimest manifestation throughout its limits of the glory of Him who made and who upholds it—these ends are in their nature transcendent, and in duration endless. Here, then, we find the highest department in God's Administration. To this, creation and providence are both subordinate. He has created the universe. he now controls it, that through his moral government—in its administration of perfect law—its interests may be secured, the Right maintained, his Glory shown. On this, as the prime end, God's view is fixed. To this all other things are incidental. And in connection with this, will be most fully developed the whole stupendous resources of the Godhead.

What light, my friends, does this fact shed upon the Miracles of the Scripture! The Infidel has said, they are not credible; and has striven to prove it. But when we remember that all the laws of nature are but the expressions of God's free will, and all are but subordinate conditions to his Moral administration,—how credible it is, how almost even to have been anticipated, that at particular points the usual laws should have been suspended, the usual modes of action have been departed from, for the more perfect attainment of higher ends! He who thus thoughtfully considers the method of God's system, will find no difficulty in the belief of Miracles. It is the steadfast base, on which the historical argument should rest its column.

What a view is presented, too, by our present thought, of the nature and value of the Material System! It is not in itself an end, but merely the means to the attainment of an end higher than it—a necessary incident in the Divine administration. It is the

scaffolding to an invisible Temple, rising within. It is the body, important only from its relation to the Soul. As a means, it is most admirably fitted to the accomplishment of its purpose. In its construction and arrangement, have been most signally displayed the wisdom of God, and his boundless benevolence. Yet it is only *a means*. Filled as it is with the trophies of God's omnipotence, —crowded at every point with evidences of the skill conjoined with love, that not alone hold every system to its appointed path, but that line the sea-shell with its pearly enamel, that shed upon the insect's wing its Tyrian dyes, that rear in beauty the tiniest flower that feels the light and drinks the dew,—noble and beautiful as is the entire System, with all the mighty forces that work unceasingly within it, the laws of harmony that build and mould its fair proportions, the almost infinitude of space across which it extends, the vastness of the periods through which it shall endure,—it is still only as the home of moral beings, the theatre of moral action, the scene and realm of Moral Law, that it becomes of worth! Its laws, its forces, its whole adjustment and constitution, are but the means to this. For this, through the long reach of ages, the mighty agencies of flood and fire have fitted it for man. For this, the granite bars sustain its surface. For this, the power of God sweeps it unerringly around the sun. The light rests on it sweetly, that Man may act beneath its beams. The atmosphere enwraps it, the heavens spread over it their vast expanse, the showers descend upon it in their season, the singing birds find homes among its branches,—that Moral Beings, made in God's image, and subject to his law, may here act freely, developing their character, choosing their course. And when the end is gained, the power that holds it on its poise will be withdrawn. When all the moral beings for whom God fitted it have lived upon it, and freely acted, and passed away, his hand will simply sink from beneath it, and all its wondrous mechanism, 'like the baseless fabric of a dream,' will melt into forgetfulness.

Oh, then, how vain to love the Earth, as if its worth inhered within it! as if it were of its own nature permanent! as if it were not all an outward stage for the development of character—a needful INCIDENT to God's great plans!

Again, and secondly, our subject shows us WHAT IS THE RULING PURPOSE AND AIM OF GOD IN HIS MORAL ADMINISTRATION. It is, the maintenance of the Law; the subjugation or the destruction of all opposing forces; and the establishment of its principles, throughout the creation, as the supreme and constant rule of moral action. To this, as we have seen, the goodness and holiness of God both pledge him; his regard for the highest well-being of his Creation, and his love for the Right, which shines out in the Law. It is not more certain, therefore, that all the other departments of his government will be subordinate to the Moral, than it is that in the Moral, this purpose will be supreme: to establish the Law, and give

it supremacy;—and that not only the agencies of creation and providence, but all the means specifically appropriate in Moral government, will be subordinate to this.

And looking from this point, we see, my friends, the reason and the need of the tremendous PENALTIES denounced in Scripture against transgression. There is nothing vindictive or arbitrary in them. They do not show excited passion upon the part of God, or any, the slightest, disregard of the happiness of his subjects. But they show clearly, with unmistakable distinctness, and with unspeakable impressiveness, his love for the Law. They show how certainly he is bent upon maintaining that, as not alone commanding and sublime in its inherent rightness, but as essential, and absolutely, to the well-being of the Creation. They show, too, his knowledge of the power of sin; and of the fearful tendencies to its commission which lie, dormant but living, in every human breast, and which are ready, at any touch of temptation, to spring at once into development and dominion. It is a mark, therefore, of God's benevolence, not less than of his holiness, that he has fixed these penalties as the reward of the transgressor; that by their mighty pressure, he may hold back the bursts of human guilt. It is his infinite wisdom—oh! let us all remember this—it is the wisdom and love of God, that not alone give power to obey to every moral being, and furnish motive for that obedience, and entreat to its exercise, and show the beauty of its spirit as manifest in Christ, and the glory of its Recompense, as dimly shadowed forth in the Apocalyptic imagery,—but that also, to all this, still superadds the warning of the doom of the rebellious; still shows an anguish as endless as the glory; still matches the palaces of Heaven with prisons of Despair; and brings to view, not only the sea of pure gold as of transparent glass, but also the sea of blackness, inwrought with fire, from which are borne upon the ear the sounds of wailing! Truly, my friends, laying aside all low and narrow views, which merely embrace the relations of punishment to individual transgressors, and raising ourselves in thought in some degree to the majesty and the reach of the Divine Administration,—how perfectly in harmony with all its course are these denunciations perceived to be! and how imperfect, without them, would have been the manifestation of God's benevolence!

And in the light of this same thought,—that God's great purpose in moral government must be the maintenance of the law, and the securing of its supremacy,—what views are opened of the ATONEMENT, by Christ? He died, to reconcile the maintenance of the Law with the forgiveness of the sinner; not to destroy the law, but to establish and fulfil it; not to condemn the world, but that the world, condemned already, through Him might live. For aught that we can say, it might have been possible for God, in the nature of things, to save the sinner without redemption; but he could not have done it consistently with the great purpose and end of his

administration; with that establishment of the Law for moral beings in which his goodness and holiness alike are involved. The work of Christ was therefore needful; to manifest the excellency of the law, and its claims upon our obedience,—and thus to establish and ratify its authority, and to display the righteousness of its Divine Executive,—before transgression could be forgiven. He did this by his life of holiness. He did it by his obedience unto Death; by his sacrifice of Himself, upon the cross of Calvary.

And is it too mysterious, that God should have thus become incarnate? Is it incredible, inconceivable, that Christ has died to make Redemption? If it were by itself, an isolated fact, a fragment in the universe, without relations to God's System, grant that it would be. Yet when we see how indispensable it was, both as a basis of pardon for sinners, and as a means of influence over them; how absolutely it was needful, for the attainment of every highest end in Moral Government,—the vindication of the law, the rescue of the sinner, and the full exhibition of God's essential glory, of holiness and of love; and then, when we remember how absolutely supreme is this department in His whole empire, how everything else is subordinate to his moral administration;—what wonder is there even in this Unspeakable Transaction! What marvel, that such stupendous agencies were then invoked! If God's creative power were put forth freely, to furnish merely the scene of moral action, to raise the arena on which there might go forward the processes of his government—if even in this initiatory step the whole magnificent array of worlds and systems were summoned from nothing, and marshalled upon chaos till all the sons of God, catching their harmonies, shouted for joy;—what wonder, that in the CRISIS of that government, and its high exigency,—when all its ends seemed liable to be lost, the law be unobeyed, the happiness of the race remedilessly destroyed,—that then the wisdom and power of God were all evolved, in this stupendous act, the grandest it may be in even Celestial history, to save and carry forward the mighty System!

Oh, if we think rightly of God, as not alone Creator and Preserver, but also Moral Governor; as sitting upon his throne of holiness, and judging the earth in equity and in love—if we think rightly of this his moral government, as having for its end the maintenance of his law and its complete establishment, the welfare of his creatures, and his own glory; to which creation and providence are both subordinate, to forward which, when they are needful, the most mysterious agencies will be combined:—then, my friends, we have found the Key that opens to us the mystery, not of the material universe alone, but also of revelation; that shows the deep significance and solemnity of human life; that gives its meaning and its moral to every star that glitters as a jewel upon the brow of night; that shows the Punishment of the future most wise and good; and makes that Roman cross on which Christ hung, the Centre and the Pillar of God's whole system.

Again, therefore, and finally, our subject shows us THE GUILT AND FOLLY OF BREAKING THIS LAW OF GOD, AND OF REJECTING CHRIST'S ATONEMENT.

To break the Rule of Conduct ordained of God for moral beings involves guilt, not merely because that is established upon God's appointment, and we are bound to obey Him, but because its principles are right in themselves, and right immutably; and their perfect development, in the conduct and character, is the indispensable condition of the well-being of the universe. To violate these, therefore, is to strike a blow at the centre and source of all well-being; "to jar 'gainst nature's chime;" and to send abroad, through all the circle of its effects, discord instead of order, confusion and chaos instead of beauty. Against an act like this, the Conscience remonstrates the more emphatically as it is educated more thoroughly. Over it angels, seeing its nature, and following out in part its influences, must mourn and weep. And God Himself, comprehending it fully, and seeing in his omniscience its furthest issues, must infinitely abhor it.

And it is perilous, as well as guilty; perilous to a degree that makes its intelligent commission, by a spiritual being, seem little short of atheism or of insanity. For the Law which is here broken, is not only the most permanent, but in itself the principal and highest law, the Ground Law, so to speak, of the whole universe; the law, to which all others are subordinate; the maintenance of which is God's first purpose, and whose full execution is just as certain as His omnipotence. We plunge the hand into the flame, and it will burn us. We step from off the precipice, and we are crushed in the descent. We take into our system the deadly poison, and life itself is burned up by it. But in the LAW OF GOD, distinctively so called,—in that great moral law of which the Saviour spoke, which now pervades the system, which shall outlast it,—there is a deeper reality, a higher certainty, than in any of these; yes, than in all combined! The natural law may be suspended; the moral, cannot. A miracle might snatch us, conceivably, from physical destruction; but miracles, themselves, shall only sustain, illustrate, and enforce the Law of God. When we break this, therefore—aside from Christ, and His redemption—we make our own destruction certain. We call against us that whole collected might, that built the Universe to be the scene of its supremacy. And there is nothing else so certain, as that, for that transgression, we shall be punished; and all the Penalty of the Law be visited on us. In Christ, then, is our only hope! He is the one, the sole Deliverer! For LAW, as such, knows no release; and God, as governor, can be but its executive; there is no other atonement but that of Christ; and "heaven and earth shall pass, before one tittle of the law shall fail."

Oh, then, shall we neglect the Saviour? Because we do not see the Law in actual operation, shall we esteem it null? Because it

is restrained for a time in execution, by God's gracious decree, and does not catch us upon the instant in its tremendous grasp, shall we flatter ourselves that it is all Advice? that as a LAW, it will not be enforced? that it has passed away, perhaps, already? and we, though setting ourselves unflinchingly against it, are in no danger? in need of no Redemption? From such insanity, my friends, may God deliver us! And while he shows us the Law, its permanence and supremacy; and while he shows us Christ, the Saviour before the Law for all who trust him—may we give up our pride; be swetly led unto the Lamb of God; accept him as our Redeemer, and thus be JUSTIFIED through Him; robed in the righteousness of Faith; made subject to the Law, and the recipients of its promise; and fitted, when Heaven and Earth have passed away, and all the Material System has crumbled as a vesture, still to exult in our obedience, and still to triumph in its dominion!

II.

RESPONSIBILITY OF ENJOYING THE CHRISTAIN MINISTRY.*

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It is not easy to estimate the debt of gratitude which those portions of the earth owe to the distinguishing goodness of God, who enjoy the stated ministrations of his word. The Christian ministry is among the selectest blessings which can be enjoyed by men; one of the most important elements of individual, social, and national prosperity. It is the institution which, above all others, makes Christian lands what they are, girds them with a zone of light, and sheds upon them the balmy influences of heavenly mercy.

"What nation," said Moses to ancient Israel, "is there so *great*, that hath *statutes and judgments so righteous*, as all this law which I set before you this day?" This was the pre-eminence of the Hebrew state; they were a better instructed and better governed people, a holier and happier people, than any of the surrounding nations. The God of Abraham was a "glory in the midst of them, and a wall of fire round about them." There he set his "tabernacle for a shadow in the day-time from the heat, and for a covert from storm and from rain." Speaking of the restoration of that backsliding and chastised people, after days of darkness and rebuke, God himself says to them, "Turn, O backsliding Israel, for I am married unto you; and I will take you one of a city and two of a family, and I will bring you unto Zion. And I will give you" —what is the gift that the greatest of all givers will give to his restored and re-espoused people?—"I will give you *Pastors* according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." The Psalmist, in speaking of them, says, "Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance." If this pre-eminence was enjoyed by the Jewish people, under a comparatively dark and shadowy dispensation, with how much stronger propriety does it belong to Christian lands, enjoying, as they do, so much clearer light, and that "better covenant, founded upon better promises?"

This is not a subject on which the Scriptures speak in doubtful

* Transferred, by permission of the publishers, from the "Power of the Pulpit."

or pneumatic language. They tell us of the *gifts* of God to men: above all others do they magnify his "unspeakable gift," the gift of his *only* and *well-beloved* Son. They speak, too, of the gifts which his Son bestows, as the rewarded and rewarding Mediator: gifts which he purchased by his death, and of which he is the honored dispenser. When he ascended up on high, "he gave gifts to men," worthy of his royal bounty, and such as he himself selected as the most fitting and striking expressions of his munificence on his first accession to his mediatorial throne. "He gave—some, Apostles; and some, Prophets; and some, Evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry."

These are the gifts he bestows *on us*. The "lines have fallen to us in pleasant places, and we have a goodly heritage." We may glory in the vastness of our territory, and in the rapid growth of an enterprising population; we may survey with high and honest exultation the blessings of that civil and religious liberty which we have received from our fathers; but if we are not recreant to the trust committed to us, and feel as they felt, we shall prize the Christian ministry. Amid all the beautiful and varied scenery which delights our eye as we look over this broad land, we shall not overlook her ten thousand churches; and amid all our delighted exultation, we shall remember it is written, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

Privilege and obligation are but correlative terms. The greater the privilege, the greater the duty, and the greater the sin of leaving it unperformed. We ask more for the pulpit, than that it be provided with a pious and well-educated ministry; and we ask more for the ministry, than that it should receive an adequate pecuniary support, and be respected and encouraged. We claim for it a practical regard of the truths it inculcates, and the duties it enforces. We ask for it that character, those hopes, and those efforts which it was instituted to attain and advance.

The first great duty which the pulpit urges, is "repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." It leads us to the simplicity of the method of salvation by a crucified Redeemer;—the simplicity of a spiritual faith, in Jesus Christ in opposition to that righteousness which is by the deeds of the law; the simplicity of Christian worship, in opposition to the tedious and complicated observances of all false religions. The just expression, and proof of its power is found when those who enjoy its dispensations cordially receive this system of truth and grace, and confide in that Saviour through whom they are delivered from the curse of the law, whose blood answers every charge, covers every sin, enforces every plea, and itself pleads with irresistible power. Here lies the first and great responsibility of those who are favored with a Christian ministry. Men do not duly prize any one of its claims until

this duty is performed. Their obedience to the Divine authority begins here; it is vain for them to think of anything like conformity to his will, so long as they reject him whom God has sent, and refuse his instructions who comes to them with so many attestations of his divine mission. We call upon men, therefore, everywhere, to renounce their pretensions to self-righteousness,—to feel their sin and condemnation,—to be sensible of their inability to save themselves,—to be conscious that they have no claims, no merit, and to throw themselves upon him who is the Author and Finisher of this great salvation. We call upon them to feel that for any good purpose they have nothing, and need all things;—to bow at his footstool, who is so holy that the heavens are not clean in his sight; and there where archangels bow, and devils tremble, to smite upon their breasts, and say, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

Whence is it that men listen to the message brought to them by the Christian ministry, with not half the interest and eagerness with which they listen to a lecture on themes of mere secular interest? A lecture on astronomy, or history, or some important department in the arts; a mere play at the theatre, or song at the opera, or a paragraph from the press, telling of battles lost or won, and treaties ratified or rejected, holds them in silent thought and admiration. But the lessons of God's redeeming love; the song that was first rehearsed by angels on the plains of Bethlehem; the treaty of peace between heaven and earth, signed with the name of the ever-blessed and adorable Trinity, and sealed with the blood of the Lamb,—whose eye sparkles, whose bosom glows at messages like these; and where are the voices that repeat these glad tidings? Bold operations in business interest them; the aged gather up their wandering and rouse their torpid thoughts, and the young take fire at the doubtful enterprise;—but tell them of durable riches and righteousness, of heavenly gems and diadems brighter than Gabriel wears, and they make light of it; it is tame—to listen to it is a task.

What miserable,—what guilty delusion is this! I look around me, and see men following their different secular pursuits with all the ardor and zeal they are capable of exercising. Difficulty and dangers do not discourage them, but rather give energy to their efforts; they are not phantoms and trifles that they are pursuing, but realities. But there is one thing about them all which they have forgotten, and that is, their *uncertainty*. They "know not what shall be on the morrow." They are eagerly grasping the "greatest, the most slippery *uncertainties*." This is a remarkable fact in the history of man. There is but one *certain event* in all his future course. Be he high or low, rich or poor, learned or unlearned, happy or miserable, young or old, the friend of God, or his enemy; there is not one among all the millions of our race, who can, with certainty, anticipate any other event in his future history,

save the single one, that he *must die*. But shut out this message of God's redeeming mercy, and what a fearful certainty is death! Peradventure his course may be serene and cheerful up to that hour of sadness; but there darkness overshadows him—terror agitates him—deep and heavy clouds settle over the gates of death. All beyond,—what is it? Yet is there a "clearing" even through this dark valley; a bright opening; a vista of the heavenly world. O there is everything in death to make us dread its approach, apart from those principles and hopes, which rise like the star of promise on the soul.

"Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The Ancient of Days, the Son of man, the Spirit of truth and grace in all their undivided love authorize this mission, and stand pledged to confirm the message which it bears. The words of men may be counsels of wisdom;—the words of God have the force of law. The words of men are of doubtful verity;—the words of God are truth. The words of men may be unaccomplished words;—God's counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure. The heavens and the earth shall pass away, but his words shall never pass away. Wonderful as these truths are, gracious as they are, and tremendously fearful as they are, they are as unchangeable as the Deity; they are settled in heaven, and established forever. There is all the sincerity about them which belongs to the essence of truth and goodness; all the authority belongs to them which belongs to Infinite rectitude and Omnipotent justice. They are fixed and permanent as his throne: they will never be retracted, never altered; nor are they revealed in such a way as to stifle our hopes, or excite one needless fear. There is nothing wavering, nothing uncertain in relation to any one feature of this Gospel; come what will, it will stand in all its forms and colors, in all its promises, and in all its threatenings. Whether men receive, or reject it, it shall pursue its steady course, impelled by an unseen, but Omnipotent hand, and bring everlasting glory to its Divine Author.

How constraining the motive, then, to listen and obey when God thus addresses us! How solemn the admonition, "See that ye refuse not *him that speaketh;* for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth; how much more shall not we escape, if we refuse him that speaketh from heaven!" There was binding authority in the message of the ancient dispensation; God was its Author. Yet was it preparatory only to the one that "cannot be moved." God "who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." Were an angel from heaven to visit our world, we should crowd around him, and should be anxious to know the errand on which he came. Angels *have* descended in times far gone by, and men listened to their errand with astonishment. But their message was a very subordinate one to that

brought by the Son of God. "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall they escape who neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him." We have the same testimony. Men disregarded the voice of God's prophets; they stoned some, killed sone; "yet having one Son, he sent *him*, saying, They will reverence my Son!" It is the Saviour's voice by whom this message is uttered. He bows his heavens and comes down. He walks amidst the golden candlesticks. When his ministers speak in his name, he is with them; when his people meet together, he is there. He will be sanctified in them that come nigh him, and before all the people will he be glorified.

It is a solemn thought, too, that to those who reject this divine message, *it is as though no real message had been revealed.* We have spoken of the power of the pulpit, of the constituent elements of that power, and of the correlative obligations of its ministry; but what is all this to the man who disregards the message it brings? It is as though the pulpit had no power; nay, it is as though there were not a Christian pulpit in the world. It is as though there were no Sanctuary, no Sabbath, and no Gospel and all the light of these precious hopes were blotted out in the darkness of Paganism, and in the gloom of the grave. Shall it be thus? Shall the voice of nature demand these instructions, and shall that affecting cry for help be suppressed? Shall the pulpit win its ten thousand triumphs, through darkness, through trial, through enemies, through the faggot and the gibbet; and shall there be obduracy, more powerful than they all, that leaves the dwellers in Christian lands bound in chains to the ignominious car of sin and death? We have spoken of what the pulpit has done. Time would fail to tell of the millions whom it has made holy and happy. They have lived in peace, and when death came, have lifted their eyes to the eternal hills whence cometh their help. Over a world strewed with the ruins of a thousand generations, this message of heavenly mercy has passed with a life-giving power, quickening them who were dead in sin, and raising them up to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

O the blessedness of this sweet hope in Christ! Just conceive of a man in the state of William Howard, so distressed by a view of his sins and danger, that he says, "So great was the anguish of my soul, that I lamented God had spared Noah and his family. O that they had been swept away by the Deluge; then I had never been!" And after he had become reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, speaking of his joy, he says, "My tongue, or pen, can faintly describe it. All the bliss that I had ever enjoyed, was no more like it than midnight darkness is like the meridian sun. It was heaven indeed; something of the real nature of heaven I then enjoyed. My soul was wrapt in the embraces of the adorable Jesus, and I was so overpowered with holy love that I was lost to everything

else." It is related of the Countess of Huntingdon, that she was brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, through the instrumentality of the single remark of the Lady Margaret Hastings, that "since she had known and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, she had been as *happy as an angel.*" When the Sun of righteousness beams on the soul, sometimes rising like the faint light of the morning, and sometimes bursting upon the benighted mind in meridian splendor, joys visit it that are alternately serene and rapturous, now tranquil, and now unspeakable and full of glory.

The brightest earthly career has its trials, and they are trials which find no relief and no alleviation but from the Divine presence and favor. Here alone is the febrifuge for the burning heart; the pillow for the aching head.

"How soft to lean on Heaven!
To lean on Him on whom archangels lean."

This world forsakes us on the approach of the winter's storm; before the chill blasts of adversity it retires. Not so the religion of the Gospel. Misery in all its forms has peculiar attractions for this message of heavenly mercy. The spirit of the world and the spirit which is of God often meet at the door of human wretchedness; but the former leaves it because the sources of its joy are dried up; the latter enters because there are sources of bitterness, and tears to be wiped away. Such love and pity are found in the Gospel of Christ, and only there, for misery and poverty like ours. Not until this celestial messenger is made welcome, can men be holy, or happy. The voice of reason, the voice of conscience, the voice of God, every cross and disappointment, and trial repeats the call, "My son, give me thy heart!" And O that, from that insatiable thirst for happiness so deeply implanted in the soul of man, every one of my readers may respond, My heart, blessed Lord, will I give!

But there is another alternative. "He that is not with me," says the Lord Jesus, "is against me." *Those who reject this message of the Christian ministry, do so on their own responsibility, and at their own peril.* "If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself; but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it." Men who have been distinguished for the success which crowned their labors, have also been distinguished for making hard hearts harder, and blind eyes blinder. There is a reason for this in the nature of their message; for the very truths which are most fitted to interest and impress, when long and perseveringly rejected, only leave the mind more obdurate. This is the way men become ripe for destruction; it is in the midst of scenes of mercy, where they wander as in a desert and parched land, and whence they go at last, where there is not a drop of water to cool their tongue. This is the direful catastrophe. This *will be the end of disregarding and rejecting the message of the Christian ministry.* As God liveth, this will

be the mournful end of rejecting these messages of heavenly mercy. It is no common responsibility that such men incur. If the smallest talent must be accounted for, what account must they render who all their lifetime have been favored with a preached Gospel, and who have only heard and rejected this gracious message? How bitter the reflections of such a man, as he sees the last hours of human life passing away, and the lamentation is extorted from his bosom, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved!" What a fearful transition will that be from the Christian sanctuary to the bar of God! There will be mourning then, when "many shall come from the east and from the west, and from the north and from the south, and sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God, and they themselves are cast out." Ah, they know not what they do, to whom God has given a faithful ministry, and who reject the great salvation. They are not the atheist, and the infidel, and the immoral only who perish. Large and free as it is, the love of God is no refuge even for the moral and the orthodox, who treat the message of his ministers as they treat their Master, and tread it under their feet. It is the last message. Infinite love makes its greatest effort here. It cannot do more. "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin."

When the rich man in the parable lifted up his eyes in hell, and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom, he cried and said, "Father Abraham have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame!" The time will come when the despisers of our message will cry for mercy, whether they ever did before or not. They will cry long and loud; they will lift up their voice in awful distress; but there shall be none to answer. Nor will it be long before that day of calamity shall come. It may be forty years; it may be twenty; it may be ten; it may be five; it may be two; it may not be one. Eternity is nearer than they think of, and that place of torment is as near as eternity. We know not what a day may bring forth. Yesterday is fled upon the eagle wings of time; to-morrow belongs to God and not to man. These golden Sabbaths will soon have passed away, and the voice of the living ministry will soon be silent among the silent dead. Could those who die in their sins come back again and live, its message would not be so urgent. But they come not. You call, and they answer not again. You look for them in the visions of the night; but it is all a dream. They appear not to mortal eyes; they speak not to mortal ears. They are not in heaven, but are shut up in hell. Would that the man who rejects the salvation of God could be transported to eternity for an hour, if it were but to witness the agony of those who once occupied a place in God's sanctuary, and whom nothing could induce to fall in with the redemption that is in Christ Jesus! O dreadful doom! not to be described by mortal

tongue: yet to be endured by every mortal man that refuses this offered mercy!

If the writer dwells a moment longer on thoughts like these, it is because they are affecting thoughts to his own mind, as a preacher of the everlasting Gospel. The Christian ministry is God's selected instrumentality in accomplishing his purposes of grace. It is set for the defence of the Gospel, and for the vindication of the Divine government over this fallen world. Eternity alone can disclose the responsibility of preaching this Gospel: eternity alone can disclose the responsibility of rejecting it. Think of a man sitting for ten, or twenty, or forty, or sixty years under the varied influences of an instructive pulpit. What a vast amount of truth has he listened to! How much toil and ingenuity have been expended in order to frame arguments to convince his understanding, to construct appeals that should rouse his conscience, to furnish illustrations that might interest him, and to urge motives that might persuade him to become reconciled to God! How often has he trembled at the rebuke, and wept under the affecting persuasions that would fain have constrained him to become a Christian! Who can measure the responsibility of such a man, even though he may have listened to the meanest pulpit in the land! *That pulpit*, what will be the testimony, and what his recollections of *that pulpit*, when the Saviour there made known shall judge the world in righteousness! What a stream of light has poured from it upon many a benighted mind, which, if it had enlightened Sodom and Tyre, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes!

Men who enjoy a faithful Christian ministry know too much of God and his Christ, to consent to go away into everlasting burnings. Better for them to have died from the womb, or as a hidden, untimely birth that had not been, as infants which never saw the light, than to have been dwellers in this world of mercy, and at last make their bed in that lake of fire.

Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish! Adore, ye lovers of God and the Gospel of his Son, that by the foolishness of preaching he is pleased to save them that believe!

III.

BECOMING ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN.

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..... "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."—1 Cor. ix. 22.

If there be a passage in any language worthy to be compared, for the nobleness and sublimity of its sentiments, with the vindication which Paul has made of himself in this ninth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, we have not yet been fortunate enough to discover it.

We cannot be insensible to the magnanimous bearing of Aristides "the Just," when defending his pure fame against the jealousy of his great rival Themistocles; deeply are our sympathies moved when we read of men like Galileo and Columbus, wronged and defrauded by those whom they had benefited, standing forth to repel aspersion, and vindicate their own names and achievements; infected with his own deep pathos are we all, when we read the words with which the Earl of Chatham stirred the British senate in defence of his life, spent in public service, against the attacks of men who could not, or would not, appreciate his motives; but not one of these signal passages in the history of forensic eloquence is equal to the chapter now before us, in which, under the necessity of self-defence, the Apostle to the Gentiles appeals to the principles and conduct of his disinterested and noble life.

He had been falsely accused by false men; who, by misjudging his motives and degrading his official character, sought to impugn and degrade Christianity itself; and the occasion demanded that he should step forth from the modest retirement, in which the conscious uprightness of his motives was left with God, and, by an explanation of his own principles, vindicate the spirit of Christianity as attacked in his person. Nor is that man to be envied, who can read this record of self-sacrificing benevolence, this devotion of oneself to hardship, and solitude, and toil, for the good of others, without the generous glow of enthusiastic admiration.

In the one verse which I have selected for my text, we have,

condensed into a few words, the *object* of his life, and the *means* by which he sought its attainment; which form of expression may serve to furnish the method to be pursued in the following discourse:—

I. THE OBJECT AND END OF HIS LIFE: "*That I might by all means save some.*"

II. THE MEANS BY WHICH HE SOUGHT TO ACCOMPLISH HIS OBJECT: "*I am made all things to all men.*"

The object of the Apostle's life was the salvation of his fellow-men. It is plain that he looked at the human race from a particular point of view. He was convinced that they were in danger; and his desire was to rescue them.

There have been a great many ingenious representations of human life. The world has been described under a very great variety of images. Old Pythagoras, when he was asked what he thought of human life, compared it to the Olympic games, where some came to try their fortune for the prizes; some as merchants to exchange their commodities; some to make good cheer and meet their friends; and others, like himself, were simply lookers-on. Epictetus, another of the old philosophers, in a very striking paragraph, which has been confessedly employed by Mrs. Barbauld as the foundation of a very ingenious essay, compared the world to a great mart of commerce, where fortune exposes to our view many and various commodities, which we may procure by purchase or barter. Others have painted life as a voyage—the revolution of the seasons—a war—a race—a school—and so on, through the whole range of metaphorical illustration. Far different was the view taken by the great Apostle. To his eye the world was a vast wreck, in danger of being broken up by the waters of a destroying deluge. Mankind were in imminent peril of being drowned in perdition; and he was running from point to point, making incredible exertions, *if by all means he might save some.* In the language employed by him at other times, the image, but not the idea, is somewhat varied. Instead of a drifting wreck, the world was as a house on fire, and its inmates in danger of being consumed in everlasting burnings. He shouts to the sleepers; he wakes them out of their slumbers; he rushes to the rescue, "pulling them out of the fire," that *by all means he might save some.* It is evident that he was thoroughly convinced of the fact that all mankind are in danger of eternal ruin. He cherishes no notion akin to the universal salvation of all his race. To him they do not appear to be floating quietly and securely towards a state of indiscriminate happiness. The sharp cry from his lips—*If by all means I might save some*—implies what he felt as to the exposure of all. He was like the wrecker pacing the shore, devising now this means, and

now that, if by all he might save a few out of the ship just ready to founder.

Was this a just and correct view of the world? Was it the fancy of a maddened brain, or the vivid conception of truth and soberness? Whence did the Apostle acquire these peculiar sentiments? Was he a misanthrope, soured and moping? Was he a disappointed man, taking revenge upon the world, by maledictions, for his losses? When he first comes to our notice, a young man in high favor and popularity, a scholar trained in legal tactics, in repute with the priesthood and the people, he has none of those views of life which he subsequently possessed. He is first introduced in history as a persecutor, more intent on cruel slaughter than the salvation of his fellow-men. But a change passes over the whole spirit and tenor of his life. Scales fall from his eyes, and he is enlightened by the Spirit of God to discern new things concerning himself and the world. He feels that he is rescued from the bonds of iniquity and from the jaws of hell. Is he right in the judgment he now passes, that the world lieth in wickedness? Has he grown suddenly less pitiful, and more morose, than when he was hauling men and women to prison, compelling them to blaspheme the name of Jesus Christ? Has his theology just emerged from the cave, or descended in light from the skies? Here we are not left in doubt. The knowledge he had concerning God and his Christ came down from heaven; and the commission given to him at his conversion was to "go among the nations, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them who are sanctified by faith that is in Christ." Here was his theology. The race in their sins, and for sin forgiveness through faith in Christ, the Saviour. This is Christian theology. This is its characteristic in distinction from all speculations of philosophy, ancient or modern. It furnishes relief from an universal calamity. Whenever we use the familiar words, *Saviour* or *salvation*, we do, in fact, admit all that is declared concerning the lost condition of the human race. Jesus Christ came to seek and to save that which was *lost*. Paul learned to view the world as it was contemplated by his Lord and Master. Nor did he view it as a Fatalist or as a Stoic. He was touched by a more than mortal tenderness towards his fellow-men. His heart's desire and prayer to God in their behalf was, that they might be saved. He who was once ready to persecute unto blood, was filled with the compassion of his Lord, and animated with the hope of saving, at least, some. This now becomes the motive of his life. To behold men ready to perish, without relief, would have tortured him to despair; but there was a way of affording relief, and by the hope of success was he impelled to great exertions. No matter in whose presence he stood, whether the keeper of a jail, a soldier on guard, or a governor, king or emperor, his uppermost desire was to save that

man's soul. Of himself he was forgetful, as men always forget themselves in the excitement of great endeavors for others. "I seek not yours, but you," was the explanation of all his peculiar intercourse with men. To publish the Gospel was a necessity laid upon him. "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel." To preach the Gospel was his choice. He was impelled to it by the irresistible fervor of Christian love. Others might prefer other pursuits; one thing only remained for him. Preferment in church or state, wealth, learning; all which he himself, in common with others, had once counted as an excellency, seemed unto him now as the very filth of the earth; and were to be counted as loss, save as they bore upon the accomplishment of his grand purpose—the salvation of men. This is the key which explains the whole of his speeches, his travels, his self-denials, his remarkable life. He was an insane man, and nothing short of it, if there was not a reality and a reasonableness in the motive which governed him. It was not at Jerusalem only that men were exposed to the wrath of God; so he fled, as on angels' wings, to Arabia, to Ephesus, to Athens, to Rome, to Spain, to announce the news of a Saviour's mercy. The barbarians of Malta heard him; the Areopagites listened to him with solemn awe; the mariners of the stormy Adriatic were his auditors; those of Cæsar's household were told the tidings from his lips; well nigh every land and every city, from Spain to Arabia, had seen and heard this extraordinary man, who *by all means hoped to save some.* A hero he was, a hero he meant to be, but not as the world counts heroism. Might he not, says he, in this chapter, have taken a wife, if he had chosen? Might he not have received support from those to whom he preached? Was not this the law of God? But if he chose to forego domestic ease, and the support to which he was entitled, that he might the better perform his heart's desire, in saving lost men, were his motives for this to be misunderstood and impugned?

Do not suppose, dear brethren, that my purpose in this is to pronounce a panegyric upon the Apostle. I propose something far more practical than an encomium upon his noble conduct.

He has himself announced, in our text, what was the one end and motive of his life:—To save the souls of men. His whole life, as we have seen, subsequent to his conversion, was coincident with this motive. If he was sane and sober in this view of the world, and in this course of conduct, there is every reason why we should adopt and practise the same. No great change has passed of a sudden, upon the nature of man, to render obsolete and inappropriate the words of Jesus Christ: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And if the words of the Apostle, inspired by the Spirit of God, are to be received as a correct exponent of Christianity, then we too should look upon our fellow-men, as he did, in danger of being lost; and we too should be touched by the tender compassions of Christ, and animated by

apostolical fervor, *if by all means we may save some.* All other pursuits are to be held subordinate to this. Not that they are to be abandoned for the one employment of preaching the Gospel; but that they are to be prosecuted in reference to the same end and object which filled the eye of the Apostle. There is a value in those very objects which many pursue for selfish ends, beyond all which concupiscence and ambition ever dreamed. There is a value in gold and silver, beyond all that the most sordid miser ever imagined, as he drops the shining ore into his bags and boxes. There is a value in learning and knowledge above all that was ever imagined by any one who, stimulated by the mere ambition of excelling, has grown gray in midnight study. So of station, power, or influence of any kind; seeing that they may, and ought to be applied to the grand purpose of saving a lost world.

II. But it is time that we pass to the next division of our subject, and consider the means by which the Apostle sought to accomplish the object which was his motive in life. He *became all things to all men.*

And here it will be necessary to make careful discrimination; seeing that what Paul here intended was instrumental in doing so great a service; while the words chosen to convey his meaning may be easily perverted, as indeed they have been by many, who wrest them to their own and others' destruction. Happily the discrimination is very easily made. What the Apostle actually intended is best understood from his own words. "For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak. I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the Gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you."—(Ver. 19–23.)

If there be a character in all the world which merits our unmitigated scorn and detestation, it is that of a man who, on important subjects, will trim and truckle in conformity with the company into which he happens to be thrown; who, in one position will give up his opinions, if he has any, to suit one class of people, and in another circle will maintain the very same, and that most strenuously, to suit others. Now, it is almost derogatory to the character of the noble-hearted Apostle to the Gentiles even to say, that his spirit and conduct bore no resemblance to such a mean and fawning sycophancy. Nor is there anything here in conformity with the doctrine of modern Jesuitism, that "the end justifies the means;" that because the object to be attained, to

ends, the salvation of men, was benevolent and of all things important, therefore it was lawful and proper to use all kinds of means to bring it about, even duplicity, fraud, and dishonesty. How strange the solecism! Nor do we mean that the Apostle had no opinions, no principles of his own, to which he attached importance, and which he felt himself bound to defend. All such associations with the conduct of this sincere, upright, and earnest man, do injustice to his language, his life, and his sacred fame.

Opinions he had; preferences he had; a definite creed and theology he had; opinions and faith, than which he would rather have surrendered his life. While this was so in reference to *vital* truths, other matters there were which were perfectly indifferent —indifferent to him, though not to others. The Jew held to opinions and practices to which he attached great importance, but which Paul had learned to regard as altogether trivial and unimportant. He, Paul, was not under the law of ritual observances; he had experienced a better thing than that, even Christianity. Christ had liberated him from that punctilious adherence to rites and letters, which was no better than servile. But freeman though he was, if he might the better secure the confidence and affection of the Jew, so as to save his soul, he would conform to Jewish customs and preferences, so far as he might without the compromise of principle. He was willing to make himself a servant to all, that he might gain the more. Just as a slave submits to all the whims and caprices of his master, unwarrantable though they be, so Paul, with Christian magnanimity, says that he was accustomed to forego his own opinions and preferences, and accommodate himself to the preference and prejudice of others, so far as could be done with a good conscience, that he might gain them to Christ. So again, when laboring among the Gentiles—described by him as those who were "without law," that is, being uninformed concerning the rites and ceremonies enjoined in the law of Moses —he tells them that they were perfectly right in omitting many things which were practised by the Jew. He does not insist upon circumcision; indeed he absolves them from it, declaring that the *obligations* to observe that, and other kindred rites, have been done away in Christ; they were no more binding as matters of authority or necessity at all, even though he himself, when among the Jews, had conciliated them by practising what was their preference, but to him a matter of indifference. Thus his consistency is made out—and more than consistency—a noble magnanimity; a superiority above all personal preferences and prejudices, and that for others' good. When he was at Lystra, he took Timotheus and circumcised him. He was among the Jews who regarded the rite as essential. He had been taught to believe that now it was nothing. Circumcision or uncircumcision, it was nothing, if we were in Christ. Howbeit, if the Jews could be conciliated and

won to Christ, by what was "no-thing" to him, happy was he to meet their wishes; telling them at the same time, that he did not attach the same importance to the rite with themselves. He gives up himself to be a servant to Jewish whims, caprices, and prejudices; but, observe, it is upon points which he pronounces to be indifferent. He would prefer that they should see things as he did; and should do as he did; but as they could not see with his eyes, and adopt all his sentiments, he will cheerfully relinquish his own preferences to their advantage. In this, how careful was he to violate no obligation, bend no principle, break no law, offend no truth. He himself has interpreted in this parenthesis the declaration that all this pliant conformity was not as though he was without law to God; for "under law to Christ" he was; so that though he was flexible as a willow wand in his elastic and cheerful conformity to all the preferences and prejudices of Jew or Gentile, in things indifferent, he was ready to go to the cross in defence and testimony of those vital truths by which God was to be honored, and the world could alone be saved.

Understood in this sense, the conduct of the Apostle presents a rule of conduct of incalculable service to all who would seek to gain their fellow-men to Christ. If this motive *to save men*, be first in the mind; if it be distinct, intense, and earnest, it will vindicate the conduct from all those inconsistencies and meannesses which make up a selfish sycophancy. Christian pliancy, and unchristian conformity, are distinguished in two respects; as *to what* is surrendered, and *the motive* by which anything is surrendered. The selfish parasite flatters and yields, cringes and surrenders, that he may ingratiate himself, and obtain his own purposes. The Christian yields and conforms when he can, that he may save others. The one hopes to exalt himself, secure his own ends, and rise in favor with all. The other, forgetful of himself, gives up all he can, that he may win souls to Christ. The one surrenders everything, trifles with matters the most sacred, counting no price too great to be paid for his ambitious ends; willing to sell his soul and his Saviour. The other, steadfast and unshaken in vital truth, displays a magnanimous indifference in all things immaterial and unimportant.

Bunyan has sketched the portrait of the one in Mr. By-Ends, in lines so bold and strong, that no one who has ever seen the face will ever forget it. He came from the town of Fair-Speech, and pretended to be on the way to the Celestial City. For kindred he had my Lord Turnabout, and Mr. Smoothman, Mr. Facing-both-ways, Mr. Anything; and the parson of the town was Mr. Two-tongues, and his great-grandfather was a waterman, looking one way and rowing another; and his wife was my lord Feigning's daughter, so remarkably well-bred that she knew how to carry it to all, even to prince and peasant. Here was a man who, in his own words, "jumped in his judgment with the present way of the times;" whose rule of

life was "never to strive against wind and tide; but seek to please everybody, for his own advantage." The portrait, we fear, does not belong to an old gallery. It is a lifelike representation of that worldly conformity which is practised in all times and places for one's private ends. Here it is, and thus it is, that many pervert this rule of apostolical conduct, this becoming all things to all men. They learn to do as others and be as others; but alas! it is not for others' good. Conform when you can consistently, innocently, if your motive be, as with the Apostle, to save the soul. But beware that you do not take fire into your bosom to be burned, rather than hold out a lamp to enlighten others in the way of life. If your motive be not like the Apostle's, your conduct will not be as his. If you become all things to all men, that they may be pleased with you by seeing what a high-minded, accommodating, easy, worldly Christian you are, the whole process is vitiated by a bad motive, which leads you to dishonor religion, deny Christ, and instead of saving, delude and mislead, by your inconsistency, many to destruction. There is a vast difference between the Apostle Paul and Cardinal Wolsey.

Another thing is implied in this rule of conduct we are now considering. There is a *great variety of means* to be employed for the salvation of different men. I do not mean that there is more than one Gospel, or any second way of entering the kingdom of God. But the aspects of truth are indefinitely varied; the one great truth by which we are saved is not to be confined to one fixed and changeless form of expression; and it spreads itself out in conformity to the capacity and accomplishment of the mind into which it enters. If it were not so, we might as well have automata moved by clock-work to parrot off a set form of words, muezzin-like, from the top of our churches. What an infinite variety in men themselves, their talents, their dispositions, their education, their habits, their prejudices, their modes of acquiring and retaining opinions. These are circumstances which are not to be overlooked by any wise man, in the pulpit or out of it, who would be successful in saving souls. What is an excellent rule in all forms of convincing and persuasive speech, at the bar, before a jury, in a schoolroom, in a political meeting, should never be disregarded by any man who would inform, persuade, and guide others on religious subjects; viz.: Place yourself, as much as possible, in the circumstances of those whom you address. Take into account how they have been educated; make allowance for their prejudices; enter into all the feelings peculiar to their age, their station in society, and adapt your mode of approach, as far as possible, to them. Here the example of the Apostle again instructs us. With no chameleon-like propensity to change his opinions with his company; with no inconsistency whereby to condemn and degrade himself, he possessed the power, in the intense desire to do good, to place himself in the very position of any and every man whom he

would win to Christ. He did not go through the world like Sir Artegale's iron man Talus, with a flail, crushing and trampling down all opposition, provoking wrath, and stirring up to the utmost every malignant passion, rasping and lacerating feeling, having no part or lot in human infirmity. He knew how the Jew felt; and throwing himself into a Christian sympathy with the Jew, sought to save the Jew. He turned again to the Gentile, educated under different customs, familiar with a different philosophy, and forthwith he who determined to know nothing but Christ and Him crucified, adroitly conforms his style of address, his mode of approach, to his new auditors. He would have been insane had he done otherwise. He would have frustrated his own object by a different procedure.

It would be a pleasant rhetorical exercise, suited better to another place, to analyze the several discourses of Paul, as recorded in the book of the Acts, and show how skillfully he varies himself so as to conform to his several auditors. Contrast his speech or sermon in Pisidia, in the synagogue of Antioch, with his address before the Areopagites, the highest court at Athens. In the one he becomes a Jew, thinks like a Jew, speaks like a Jew; he descants on Jewish history, out of which history he brings forth the Saviour. At Athens he encounters the Epicureans and the Stoics. No stranger is he to their prejudices and their philosophies. With what inimitable grace and self-possession, a master of himself and his subject, does he set off in his address. The very style of his Greek is classical. He quotes their own Greek pagan poets. Verily the Christian Jew is transformed into a polished Grecian debater; and why should he not be, seeing that he would save some at Athens too?

Listen to him again, when, standing on the stairs of the temple, he speaks in the Hebrew tongue to the Jews; relating his conversion, and subsequently repeating the same narration in a very different form and style before Agrippa, the Roman governor. With the weak he became weak; forcing his large mind down into sympathy with all their weak and narrow prejudices, for the weak he would save. With the mighty and the noble, the wise and the great, though he had a theme which he knew would be unwelcome to their hearts, the more did he raise himself up to their level, that he might command a hearing and a respect. Among the tent-makers of Corinth, he became a tent-maker; talked in their language, sympathized in their pursuits, that they might be saved. Because the Gospel detects prejudice, it is a sad mistake to infer that it was designed to excite and provoke prejudice. When our Lord told his disciples that the effect of his gospel would be to send swords rather than peace among the relationships of life, he spoke of an effect incidental and not designed. He also instructed his disciples to be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves; and that man has not yet learned the first lesson of nature or

grace who hopes to save the souls of any in his family, neighborhood, or walks of usefulness, without considering the age, circumstances, education, and characters of those whom he seeks to approach and address.

A young minister just entering upon his profession in a rural district, was informed that a certain farmer in his parish was violently prejudiced against him as a "proud and college-bred" man. He resolved to pay him an early visit. The man was in the fields mowing the clover, in the midst of his men. The minister, wisely avoiding untimely interruption, resorted to the meadow, while the dew was yet sparkling on the grass, and requesting the loan of a scythe, led on the work, as if it had been the pleasant pastime of his youth. Prejudice was disarmed, and melted into partiality and confidence, and, subsequently, Christian conversion. To the farmer he had become a farmer, that he might save the farmer. Precisely what Paul did on Mars Hill, when he quoted to his classic audience from Cleanthus' Ode to Jupiter, and "Dionysius the Areopagite clave unto him and believed." If you would save a child, you must become a child. How absurd to give a babe strong meat; or feed Christ's little lambs in racks so high that nothing but a giraffe can reach them.

A man who has an object to accomplish, devises all expedients, invents and tries now this, now that. What is most admirably adapted to one, may be repulsion and effervescence to another. Of the art of doing good we should be studious; and means are many. We could not, in conscience, eulogize the poetry of John Bunyan as the best versification in our language. It is not quite so smooth and polished as that of Pope; nor does its measure equal the glorious majesty of Milton. Yet we might search far and long before we found better sense, or sager advice, than the following lines in his rhyming apology for the Pilgrim's Progress:—

"You see the way the fisherman doth take
To catch the fish; what engines doth he make?
Behold how he engageth all his wits;
Also his snares, lines, angles, hooks, and nets.
Yet fish there be that neither hook, nor line,
Nor snare, nor net, nor engine can make thine—
They must be groped for, and be tickled too,
Or they will not be catch'd whate'er you do."

God be thanked that we have the Dreamer's Allegory, as well as Butler's Analogy. Give children their medicine, if you must, in their milk. Many a man has found Jesus Christ in the Tinker's Dream—the second uninspired book in our language for genius, wit, and wonder—who would have found nothing but verjuice, spleen, and prejudice, as Bolingbroke did in the forced reading of Dr. Manton's one hundred and nineteen sermons on the one hundred and nineteenth Psalm.

While it is true that an incidental activity of opposition is a more hopeful sign in the recovery of the soul than downright insensibility, just as spasms and acute pain are better than paralysis and coma, yet no man has a right to provoke hostility, and excite prejudice of settled purpose and plan. We have no right to heap up stumbling-blocks; rather should we remove them, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way. It is an ingenious art of the devil to push a man on in an opinionated, self-willed, cast-iron, imprudent, and headstrong way, and then misname this Christian fidelity. Better is it to be studious of occasions. Speak a word in season. Be fruitful in expedients. Be expert in means, that by all you may save some. If the desire and motive at the heart be right, the means will not be wanting. Now it will be an interview on purpose; now an incidental word; now a visit of consolation in an hour of affliction; and now the loan of a book, or the mission of a letter. *Watch* for souls; so fowlers seek their prey, and good agencies must counteract the bad.

In short, an active desire to save men makes us catholic and prudent. And by being *catholic*, in this connection, is not meant a blind, unthinking charity, which dissolves away into vapory nothingness; and by *prudence* we intend something very different from that which the world designates by the word, in whose nomenclature it passes for an adroit avoidance of all offence to our own injury. When we say that the desire and endeavor to save lost men makes us catholic and prudent, we mean just what is implied in the conduct of the Apostle as here exhibited; a carelessness about all unimportant differences, provided that the main thing may be gained; and the seeking of the best ends by the best means.

We must now add, and that emphatically, that there is little hope of hitting this line of discrimination, unless the heart is first possessed of the right view of man's lost condition, and prompted by the irrepressible desire to secure his salvation. If this be wanting, one is as sure to fall into worldly conformity as waters to flow downward.

> If you would learn to please,
> Do what others do with ease,

is the compendious direction of worldly and fashionable life: and this *that the world may be pleased* with you. Jesus Christ has said to all His disciples, Be not conformed to this world—in the sense of being converted over to the world—but seek, by all means, to convert the world over to Christ. Be consistent. Be manly. Be earnest. Yield what you may, when yielding will save. Be firm as a rock where you must, that thereby you may gain the more.

If our hearts were only burning with love for Christ, and the souls He has died to save, we should not need so many discrimina-

tions; nor should we be left to wander and sink in the bogs and swamps of doubtful and debatable questions, which make up so much of the supposed neutral space between Christian consistency and worldly conformity.

May the Spirit of all grace and life enlighten our eyes, and move our hearts to a just apprehension of human guilt and peril, and to all forms and expressions of fidelity, that by all means we may save some!

IV.

THE SEA GIVING UP ITS DEAD.

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"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it."—Rev. xx. 13.

The resurrection was a favorite theme with the apostles. The fact of Christ's having risen, was with them the crowning miracle of his earthly course, and an irrefragable argument of his divine mission. The resurrection of all mankind by Christ's power, to be judged at Christ's bar, was one of the truths upon which the first ministers of the gospel sought to turn the eyes of all their hearers. Peter preached this doctrine to the scribes of Jerusalem, and Paul proclaimed it amid the philosophers of Athens. And what thoughts struggle within us, as we look forward to such a change! These corruptible bodies shall stand again in the closest companionship with the souls that once inhabited them—that at death deserted them, but which now have resumed them. According to the deeds done in the body, men are to be judged. The term of probation closed when the spirit quitted the body, and dropped it into the grave. The time of judgment begins when that grave is opened and that body reanimated, "that every one may receive the things done in his body."* We are prone, perhaps, to think too much of these perishable tabernacles of clay. But we do not, my beloved hearers, think enough of them, unless we think of them often and vividly, as bodies that are one day to rise again from the dead, endued with an indestructible existence, and capacitated for the endless bliss of heaven, or the eternal misery of hell.

I. This great doctrine, the resurrection of the body, seems yet better fitted than the kindred truth of the immortality of the soul, to make a powerful impression on the mind of man, when receiving the gospel for the first time. The heathen may have heard of the existence after death of the immaterial spirit within him; but he thinks of that principle as something impalpable and unearthly, that he has never yet seen, and that is scarce the same with

* 2 Cor. v. 10.

himself. He may have heard even that after death he should still have a body. He may have been taught, as many an idolatrous creed teaches its votaries, that the soul shall pass after death into other bodies of the higher or the lower orders of being. But this doctrine of the transmigration of souls cannot take the same hold on his mind as does the scriptural truth, teaching him the resurrection of the existing body. The thoughts of the man, his fears, his hopes, and his plans, have had reference chiefly to the body. Bring him to look upon it as possible, that this—the material framework in which he has enjoyed or suffered, by which he has labored and acquired, which he has clothed and fed, and in which he has sinned—this body, which, in most of his thoughts, has been regarded as the *whole* of himself—is to live again beyond the grave, and he is startled. Talk to him of the inward man of the soul, and he listens, as if you spoke of a stranger. But bring your statements home to the outward man of his body, and he feels that it is he *himself*, who is to be happy or to be wretched in that eternity of which you tell him. Hence a living missionary, in his first religious instructions to the king of a heathen tribe in South Africa, found him indifferent and callous to all his statements of the gospel, until this truth was announced. It aroused in the barbarian chief the wildest emotions, and excited an undisguised alarm. He had been a warrior, and had lifted up his spear against multitudes slain in battle. He asked, in amazement, if these his foes should all live. And the assurance that they should arise, filled him with perplexity and dismay, such as he could not conceal. He could not abide the thought. A long-slumbering conscience had been pierced through all its coverings. Well do such incidents illustrate the fact, that He who gave the gospel knew what was in man, and infused into the leaven of his own word those elements that are mightiest to work upon all the powers of man's soul, and to penetrate with their influence the whole mass of human society. And in our announcement of that gospel, we do well to adhere to the scriptural pattern given us by the Author of the gospel. Many of the other doctrines of Christianity are almost insensibly modified, in our mode of presenting them, by the natural religion which intimates, if it does not establish, these or similar truths. But the doctrine of the resurrection of the body is not a doctrine of natural religion. It is purely a doctrine of revelation, and becomes known to us merely from the living oracles of Scripture. And as man's reason did not discover it, it is not for man's reason to alter or amend the doctrine according to his caprices and prejudices.

In what glorious and terrific imagery does the Scripture before us array the scenes of the resurrection. In the heavens, thronged by angels in all their glory, is seen the descending throne. Upon it, in his own and his Father's glory, sits the Son of Man, the crucified Nazarene, now the judge of quick and dead. Before

him the material heavens are rolled together as a scroll, and the elements melt with fervent heat. The creation cannot abide the dread presence of its Creator, "from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away;" and yet they cannot escape it: "and there was found no place for them." His bare word had accomplished the miracle of creation, and now, by a kindred act of power, his mere glance shakes the world, and awes it into preparation for the judgment. The old heathen talked of their "cloud-compelling Jove," whose eye gathered all the storms of the skies. But how mean is all this to the scriptural imagery of a world-compelling Christ. The trumpet sounds. The earth shakes with inward commotions. Its dead—its ancient dead—all the buried of forgotten tribes, and of antediluvian times, are coming; more numerous than the hosts ever mustered by earthly captain to the battle, yet all their numbers infuse into them no courage in meeting their judge. They have no thought of resisting his power. Whatever the gods in whom they trusted once, they feel now the presence, and await the fiat of the one true God, Maker and Judge of heaven and earth. The patriarchs, who lived when the world was young, and the coming generations to be born long after our death, who shall have lived when that world had grown old, shall, with us, stand before the judgment-seat. From this tribunal there lies no appeal, and of the sentence now to be uttered there can be no reversal, and no revision.

It will be a scene of solemn interest, not only as the meeting of man with his Redeemer and Judge, but from the meeting of mankind together. The scriptural accounts of the judgment represent it as an occasion when we shall know ourselves at least. From their descriptions of that day, as a day of disclosures, when the secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest, they seem also to imply that we shall know others, and be known by them. Without our consciousness of our own identity, there could evidently be no sense of guilt; and without our knowledge of the identity of our fellow-sinners, it seems to us, there could be no disclosures, such as the Bible predicts. Man then, in that gathering, will not only know himself, and know his God, but he will know his race. And this, to the sinner, will add inconceivably to the terrors of that assembling. The ungodly will meet there the righteous, who warned him in vain, and all whose warnings are about to be verified. Long-forgotten emotions, and privileges undervalued and misimproved, will flash upon the memory, as the eye glances on the face of some dead friend, with whom those feelings and opportunities were associated. The unconverted child of the Sabbath schools shall face his faithful teacher; and parents and children, pastors and people, all the connections which death had for a time sundered, shall there recognize each other. It will be to some a fearful meeting, as they encounter there for the first time those whose death they had occasioned. The murderer will confront

his victim. Cain and Abel, who have been, perhaps, parted from each other since the hour when the fratricide fled from the scene of his crime, and the body of his brother lay breathless in the dust, will now meet again. The body which sunk beneath that murderous blow, dealt by a brother's hand, and the hand which inflicted that blow, will be there, gathered again from the indiscriminate dust over which the world has trodden for scores of centuries. But if it be fearful to meet, thus, any on whom we may have brought temporal death, how much more may the scene be dreaded, by those who have occasioned the spiritual death of others, as the scene of their meeting with the proselytes and admirers, whose souls they aided in ruining forever. It will be sad for Caiaphas to meet the innocent Messiah whom he adjudged to death, though it was but the death of the body; but it would seem almost equally sad for the Jewish High Priest to face there his kindred and friends, whose unbelief his arguments sealed, and whose impenitence his example served to render obdurate and final, for upon them he will have brought the death of the soul. The meetings of the resurrection will form, then, no small portion of its terrors. This is the truth upon which we would chiefly insist, from the part of Scripture now before us. We have considered, generally, the resurrection of the dead. Let us proceed next to consider the dead of the sea, who are in our text distinguished from the rest of the dead; and thence let us pass to the effects of their reunion with the rest of mankind, who ended their mortal career elsewhere than on the deep. Our remaining divisions will be, therefore,

II. The sea giving up its dead.

III. The meeting of the dead, so given up of the sea, with the dead of the land.

II. The sea will be found thickly peopled with the mortal remains of mankind. In the earlier ages of the world, when the relations of the various nations to each other were generally those of bitter hostility, and the ties of a common brotherhood were little felt, the sea, in consequence of their comparative ignorance of navigation, served as a barrier, parting the tribes of opposite shores, who might else have met only for mutual slaughter, ending in extermination. Now that a more peaceful spirit prevails, the sea, which once served to preserve, by dividing the nations, has, in the progress of art and discovery, become the channel of easier intercourse and the medium of uniting the nations. It is the great highway of traffic, a highway on which the builder cannot encroach, and no monarch possesses the power of closing the path, or engrossing the travel. Thus continually traversed, the ocean has become, to many of its adventurous voyagers, the place of burial. But it has been also the scene of battle, as well as the highway of commerce. Upon it have been decided many of those

conflicts which determined the dynasty or the race, to whom for a time should be committed the empire of the world. It was on the sea, in the fight of Salamis, that the fleets of Greece and Persia contended, whether the despotism and wealth of the East should extend their widening sway over the freedom and arts of the West. It was in the sea-fight of Actium, that the imperial power of Rome, then claiming dominion over the world, was assured to Augustus and his successors, and the way was prepared for the universal peace that reigned at our Saviour's birth. On this element was fought the battle of Lepanto, where the right arm of the Ottoman was broken. And, as we come down to our own times, the fights of Aboukir, Trafalgar, and Navarino, all contests upon the sea, were battles affecting in no slight degree the destinies of all Europe, and the civilized world. All these have served to gorge the deep with the carcasses of men. It has had, again, its shipwrecks. Though man may talk of his power to bridle the elements, and of the triumphs of art, compelling all nature to do his work, yet there are scenes on the sea in which he feels his proper impotence. And when God lets loose his winds, and calls up his billows, man becomes sensible of his dependence. How many in all ages, since commerce first began her voyages of profit or discovery, have perished in the waters, foundering in the midnight storm, driven on the unsuspected rocks, engulfed by the whirlpool, or dashed by winds against some iron-bound coast. Even in our own times, with all our improvements in the art of navigation, and with all the expenditures that are incurred to increase the mariner's security, it has been calculated by some, that each year one thousand ships are lost at sea.

The sea, then, has its dead. And when the trump is blown, the archangel's summons to the judgment, the sea shall give up these its long-buried treasures. The gold and the jewels it has accumulated, the "buried argosies," with all the rich freight which it has swallowed up, will be permitted to slumber unreclaimed; but no relic that has formed part of the corpse of a child of Adam will be left unclaimed or unsurrendered in that hour. The invalid, who, in quest of health, embarked on the sea, and perished on the voyage, committed to the deep with the solemn ceremonies of religion—the pirate, flung into the waves from a deck which he had made slippery with blood—the emigrant's child, whose corpse its weeping parents surrendered to the deep on their way to a land of strangers—the whaler, going down quick into death midst his adventurous employment—the wretched slave, perishing amid the horrors of the Middle Passage—the sailor, dropped from the yard-arm in some midnight gale—the wrecked, and the dead in battle, all will arise at that summons. The mariners of all times, who have died on their loved element, those who rowed on the galleys of Tyre or Carthage, or manned the swift ships of Tarshish, will be there, together with the dead of our own days. The

idolater, who sunk from some Chinese junk while invoking his graven images; and the missionary of the cross, who, like Coke, perished on his way to preach the gospel to the heathen, or who, like Chamberlain, compelled to return from the field of missionary toil, with shattered health, and all wearied and spent with labors for Christ, has expired on his homeward way—all, all shall be there. As these shall reappear from the entombing waters, will their coming have no effect upon the multitudes who died on the shore, and whose bodies also the cemeteries and sepulchres of earth shall on that day have restored? We have thus reached the last division of our subject.

III. The meeting of the dead of the sea with the dead of the land.

1. There must be, then, in this resurrection from the sea, much to awaken feeling in the others of the risen dead, from this, if from no other cause: these, the dead of the sea, will be the *kindred and near connections* of those who died upon the land. Among those whom the waters shall in that day have restored, will be some who quitted home expecting a speedy return, and for whose coming attached kindred and friends looked long, but looked in vain. The exact mode, and scene, and hour of their deaths have remained until that day unknown to the rest of mankind. And can it be, without feeling, that these will be seen again by those who loved them, and who through weary years longed for their return, still feeding "the hope that keeps alive despair?" The dead of ocean will be the children and pupils, again, of the dead of the land. Their moral character may have been formed, and their eternal interests affected, less by their later associates on the deep, than by the earlier instructions they received on shore. They may have exhibited on the deck and in the forecastle only the examples they witnessed in the nursery, and the tempers they cherished, and the habits they formed in the home. When these are restored, they are restored to witness for or against their parents, and the associates of their childhood and youth. These last may have died on shore, but by their influence on the mariner, they have transmitted their own spirit and moral character over the wide waste of waters, to remote and barbarous shores. It cannot, in the very nature of the human soul—its memory, its affections, and its conscience remaining what they now are—it cannot but be a scene of solemn interest, when the dead of the land shall behold their kindred dead of the sea.

2. Let it be remembered, again, that a very large proportion of those who have thus perished on the ocean, will appear to have perished in the *service* of the landsman. The mariner will appear very generally, we say, to have found his watery grave while in the service of those dwelling upon shore. Some in voyages of discovery, despatched on a mission to enlarge the bounds of human

knowledge, or to discover new routes for commercial enterprise, and new marts for traffic. Thus perished the French navigator La Peyrouse, whose fate was to the men of the last generation so long the occasion of anxious speculation. Still greater numbers have perished in the service of commerce. The looms and forges of Britain could not continue to work, and famine would stalk through her cities, did not her ships bear abroad the manufactures of her artisans to every clime. It is to the sailor we owe it that the cottons of Manchester, and the cutlery of Birmingham reach even the wigwams of our western Indians. Literature employs and needs the seaman, and the scholar beyond the Alleghanies studies books that were purchased for him in the book-fairs of Germany, and brought across the sea by the adventurous mariner. And look to the home, and see how many of its delicacies, and luxuries, and adornments are brought to us from abroad by the sailor's skill and enterprise. And our agriculture needs his aid. The grains of the North, and the cotton of the South, would find little vent, were not the swift ships ready to bear them to a market. They have served the church also. By them the Pilgrim Fathers reached a refuge on these shores, and found a home. By them the missionary has been wafted to his station in the heathen world. As a people we are under special obligations to the art and enterprise of the navigator. We are a nation of emigrants. The land we occupy was discovered and colonized by the aid of the mariner. The seaman has, then, been employed in our service. And as far as he was our servant, doing our work, we were bound to care for his well-being; and if he perished in our service, it was surely our duty to inquire whether he perished in any degree by our fault. The ten commandments describe the duties of the employer as well as those of the parent. Care for the servant as well as the child was one of the lessons of Sinai. And though literally the servant named in the Decalogue might be only the servant of the household, not he who does service for us at a distance; yet the spirit of these commandments is not to be confined by so close and literal an interpretation. When our Saviour was asked, "Who is my neighbor?" he pointed the inquirer to the remote and alien Samaritan. All whom we can reach, and all whom we use in service, mediate or immediate, we should seek to benefit, as far as our power and influence extend.

3. Others of those buried in the waters have lost their lives *in defence* of those upon the shore. In the last of our wars with the mother country, the navy was regarded as the right arm of our defence, under God, from the foreign foe. And so it has been with other lands. Their possessions, their liberties, their families and homes, have been protected by the deaths of those whom they have never known, but who expired, fighting their battles, leagues away, on the deep sea. Are no obligations imposed on us, in behalf of

those who have thus befriended us, and in behalf of their successors and associates? Can a nation claim the praise of common honesty or gratitude, who neglect the moral and spiritual interests of these their defenders?

4. Let us reflect, also, on the fact, that many of those who have perished on the waters will be found to have perished *through the neglect* of those living on shore. We allude not merely to negligence in providing the necessary helps for the navigator. The Government, that should leave the shoals and reefs in its harbors unmarked by buoys, and that, along a line of frequented but dangerous sea-coast, should rear no light-houses, would be held guilty of the death of all shipwrecked in consequence. But may there not be other classes of neglect equally or yet more fatal? The parent who has neglected to govern or instruct his child, until that child, impatient of all restraint, rushes away to the sea as a last refuge, and there sinks, a victim to the sailor's sufferings or the sailor's vices, can scarce meet, with composure, that child in the day when the sea gives up its dead. Or if, as a community, or as churches, we shut our eyes to the miseries of the sick and friendless seaman, or to the vices and oppressions by which he is often ruined for time and eternity, shall we be clear in the day when inquisition is made for blood? No, unless the church does her full duty, or in other words, reaches in her efforts the measure of her full ability, for the spiritual benefit of the seaman, her neglect must be chargeable upon her. Now, in the Saviour's description of the condemnation of sinners at the last day, it will be observed, that he selects instances, not of sins of commission, but of sins of omission, as destroying the world. "Inasmuch as *ye did it not*," is the ground of the doom pronounced. May not the perishing sailor take up most of the items of that sentence, and charge them home upon many of the professed disciples of Christ? Neither by influence, nor prayers, nor alms, did they relieve his temporal and spiritual destitution, when hungry, or thirsty, or sick, or naked, or in prison. And far as this neglect operated to form the habits that hastened his death, and led, perhaps, to his eternal ruin, so far it cannot be desirable to think of meeting him again, among those who shall rise in the last day from the ocean depths, to stand with us before the judgment-seat.

5. Many, we remark lastly, of the dead of the sea will be found to have been victims to *the sins* of those upon shore. Those who have perished in unjust wars waged upon that element, will they have no quarrel of blood against the rulers that sent them forth? The statesmen, the blunders or the crimes of whose policy the waters have long concealed, must one day face those who have been slaughtered by their recklessness. How many of the victims over whom the dark blue sea rolls its waters, have perished, year by year, in the nefarious slave-trade. Such is the large proportion of the miserable children of Africa who die on the voyage, that, along the ordinary course of the slave ship from the eastern shores

of Africa to our own continent, the deep must be strewn, and the bottom of the sea, at some portions of the way, paved with the remains of those who have been torn from their country and home, by the orders or connivance of the slave-trader, to perish on the ocean. In the day of the resurrection that galaxy of skeletons will rise; and the voice of wailing and accusation, stilled for centuries beneath the waters, will be lifted up to be stilled no more forever. And so it may be said of every other form of wickedness, of which those that sail in our ships are rendered the instruments or the victims. The keeper of the dram-shop, or the brothel, where the sailor is taught to forget God and harden himself in iniquity, will not find it a light thing, in that great day of retribution, to encounter those whom he made his prey. The seaman may not have died on the premises of his tempter, in drunken riot; but out upon the far ocean he may have carried the habits there acquired, and died, the victim of intemperance, or profligacy, in a climate far removed from that where he was first lessoned in the ways of ruin, sinking perhaps in a shipwreck, caused, as many shipwrecks have been caused, by the intoxication of the commander or his crew. But the sea does not contain all the victims among its sons, who have thus been destroyed by the vices learned of the landsman. Many a sailor thus corrupted has perished on shore in a drunken broil, or pined away in some foreign hospital, or ended his days in a prison. Human laws seized not on those who first ensnared him; but will divine laws be equally indulgent, or equally remiss? The literature of the shore will be called to account for its influence on the character and well-being of the seaman. The song writer, who, perhaps, a hungry and unprincipled scribbler, penned his doggerel lines in some garret, little careful except as to the compensation he should earn, the dirty pence that were to pay for his rhymes, will one day be made to answer for the influence that went forth from him to those who shouted his verses, in the night watch, on the far sea, or perchance upon some heathen shore. The infidel, who may have sat in elegant and lettered ease, preparing his attacks upon the Bible and the Saviour, thought little, probably, but of the fame and influence he should win upon the shore. But the seeds of death which he scattered may have been wafted whither he never thought to trace them. And in that day of retribution, he may be made to lament his own influence on the rude seaman whom he has hardened in blasphemy and impiety; and who has sported with objections derived by him at the second hand or third hand from such writers, whilst he figured amongst his illiterate and admiring companions, as the tarred Voltaire or Paine of the forecastle and the round-top, the merriest and boldest scoffer of the crew.

The meeting, then, of the dead of the land with the dead of the sea will be one of dread solemnity, because of the ties of kindred and influence that bound them together—and because multitudes of those buried in the deep died in the service of the landsman, or

in his defence, many by his neglect, and many as the victims of the varied wickedness in which he had instructed, hardened, or employed them. Those who have been allied in sin, and accomplices in transgression, will find it one of the elements of their future torment, to be associated together in the scenes of the last judgment, and in those scenes which lie beyond that day. The animosity, revenge, and hate of the unregenerate heart, then released from all restraint, and exasperated by despair, will find vent, and rage uncontrolled through the sinner's long eternity of woe.

In conclusion, let us dwell on some of the practical results of the theme we have considered.

1. The dead shall rise, all shall rise, and together. From the land and from the sea, wherever the hand of violence, or the rage of the elements have scattered human dust, shall it be reclaimed. And we rise to give account. We rise to be judged. If, my hearers, we would anticipate that judgment, we might, as the apostle assures us, escape it, "for if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged."* If, feeling our sins, we do, as penitents, confess and forsake them, and flee to Christ and implore the Spirit, the dawn of that day will bring to us no terrors, and the sound of that trump be the welcome summons to a higher degree of blessedness. Cleansed in the Saviour's blood, renewed by the Spirit, and arrayed in the righteousness of Christ, we may in that day stand accepted, confident, and fearless. But, out of Christ, judgment will be damnation.

2. If the reappearance from the seas of the sinner, who perished in his sins, be a thought full of terror; is there not, on the other hand, joy in the anticipation of greeting those who have fallen asleep in Christ, but whose bones found no rest beneath the clods of the valley, and whose remains have been reserved under the waters until that day, while, over their undistinguished resting-place, old ocean with all its billows has for centuries pealed its stormy anthem? Then to see them freed from decay, and restored to the friends in Christ who had loved and bewailed them—this will be joy. Ensure, Christian parent, the conversion of your sea-faring child, and then, whatever may betide him, it shall be well. His body may rest as safely amid coral and sea-weed as in the churchyard; and his soul fly as swiftly to the bosom of Christ from the midst of engulfing waters, as from a death-bed, attended by all the watchfulness and all the tender sympathy of weeping friends.

3. This community especially owes a debt to that class of men, who go down to the sea in ships, and do business in the great waters. The providence of God seems to indicate that our city is yet to become the Tyre of this western world. Some have estimated the seamen who yearly visit our port at more than seventy

* 1 Cor. xi. 31.

thousand, and suppose the average number constantly in our harbor to be from three to five thousand. Contributing as they do to the comforts and prosperity of every home, and guarding, as in time of war they do, this commercial metropolis, do they not demand and deserve a still increasing share in our sympathies and aid?

4. It is, again, by no means the policy of the church, to overlook so influential a class, as that of our sea-faring brethren. They are in the path of our missionaries to the heathen. If converted, they might be amongst their most efficient coadjutors, as, whilst unconverted, they are among the most embarrassing hindrances the missionary must encounter. They have, it should be also remembered, in their keeping, the highways of the earth, along which travel its literature, its commerce, and its freedom. What would be thought of the statesmanship or patriotism of the man who, in time of war, would propose surrendering to the enemy all the roads and bridges of the land, in hopes of retaining possession of the rest of the territory? The mere proposal would be regarded as combining folly the most absurd, and treason the most disastrous. Yet what else is the church doing, if she relinquish the sea-faring class to the influence of sin and to the will of the destroyer of souls? She would be proposing virtually a most ruinous truce with Satan, when resigning these to his unresisted control, and when offering to abandon to his keeping the keepers of the highways of the nations.

5. While humbled in the review of her past negligence, and in the sense of present deficiencies, as to her labors for the seaman, the church has yet cause for devout thankfulness in the much that has recently been done for the souls of those who go down to the sea in ships, and in the perceptible change that has already been wrought in the character of this long-neglected class of our fellow-citizens and fellow-immortals. God has poured out his Spirit even on the incipient and uncertain efforts of his people; and from many a cabin and forecastle the voice of prayer even now ascends, and on many a deck the words of this salvation are read. "Let us not be weary in well-doing."

6. And now, lastly, we ask each of you: In that day, when earth and sea shall meet heaven in the judgment, where do *you* propose to stand? Among the saved, or the lost—the holy, or the sinful—at the right hand of the Judge, or at his left? Purposes of partial reformation or of future repentance cannot save you. Christ is now willing to be gracious. He who will at last appear as the Judge, now comes as the Redeemer. He is now an Advocate; soon he will be the Avenger. Heaven stoops to win you. Hell rises to allure and destroy you. Oh, yield not to Satan. Reject not Christ; for the Judge is at the door. And not this soul only of yours, but this body also must live—must live forever; and can you wish it to live in endless, hopeless misery? A throb-

bing brow, or an aching tooth, are now sufficient to embitter all the enjoyments of life. What will it be when the whole body is cast into torment? Can you desire to meet your impenitent friends, to spend an eternity together in growing hate and mutual recrimination—to face your pious friends, a godly father, or a praying mother, and catch your last glance of hope, your last sight of happiness, as you see them mounting to glory, whilst you sink yourselves into a sea of fire—the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone forever and ever?

V.

THE SCRIPTURAL ESTIMATE OF PHILOSOPHY.

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"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."—COL. ii. 8.

THE glorious richness of the epistle of Paul to the Colossians is all owing to the fulness and vastness of its presentation of Christ. The glory of Christ there rises like a sea of light, and swallows up everything else in its bosom, and on its waves the soul is borne onward, entranced, itself, in glory. And as this epistle begins with the supremacy, the infinite pre-eminence, the all-in-all-ness of Christ, in all worlds, all beings, and all things, in all God's universe, and then applies, out of this infinitude of glory and absoluteness of reign, the consequent rule of perfection and obedience for believers in Christ, so the first thing we are to consider, prior to opening the leaves of this text, is the completeness of the Christian in Christ, and the all-in-all-ness of Christ to the Christian.

"*Ye are complete in him.*" All your real need is to be in Christ, and all your anxiety should be, to be rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith in him, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. For he is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning of grace, and the completion of glory. All that we need, for time and eternity, we find in him; and he is made unto us, of God, our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. This secures our independence of all mere human wisdom. You are entirely superior to that, you have no need of that, just in proportion as you are rooted and grounded in Christ, and have access, by faith in him, through the ministration of the Spirit, to the unsearchable riches of his Word, and all God's treasures of wisdom and knowledge. *Ye are complete in him;* and therefore, when men come to you in all the puffing majesty and parade of human science and speculation, beguiling you with enticing words, and assuring you that this or that philosophy or speculation must be mastered by you, before you will comprehend the genius of Christianity, or that it is only through this or that ingenious theory, as through a new-constructed telescope, that you can see Christ Jesus as he is, or the wonders of

the Word aright, or can arrive at the completeness of Christian knowledge and character, remember that you are complete in him; and that too, not according to men's philosophies, nor by their assistance, but just according to God's Word, and by the teaching of God's Spirit. And since in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete in him, as you have been taught, in the Word, and by the Spirit, beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

And here is the first thing to be considered in the warning of this text, as a contrasted point of truth and duty, in opposition to the babblings of science falsely so called; namely, the supremacy and independence of God's Word, and of the Christian in it, under the guidance of the divine Spirit; and the fact that faith in God's Word, and in Christ Jesus as presented there, is the only perfection of human reason, the only true philosophy and science. The bringing of the Word of God to the bar of human reason, and the throwing of it upon mere external evidence and philosophy for its support and understanding, were a portion of that leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, against which our blessed Lord cautioned his disciples. But you can neither believe God's Word, nor have any understanding of it, according to the mere traditions and philosophies of men. You are thrown upon God's Spirit, and if you have not got your theology there, philosophy can never let in one ray of spiritual light upon your soul. You cannot know God's Word but by the Spirit of God. If the Holy Spirit be in your soul, guiding you into the truth, as the truth's living Interpreter, then you will see and know it; but not otherwise. All true faith is [illegible] the movement of the understanding merely, but of the heart. [illegible] in God's Word is life, a thing dependent not upon evidence, [illegible] the living Spirit. And evidence itself can never be right- [illegible] and felt, without this life. All living theology, and all power [illegible] all true knowledge of God's Word, and all power in the [illegible] knowledge, are dependent on God's Spirit, and without [illegible] Spirit as the guide and teacher of the soul, philosophy and [illegible] can do nothing for its light.

[illegible] revelation itself informs us, that this living Spirit [illegible] of God's Word, even the Spirit of Truth, is a Being [illegible] world cannot receive (that is, the world unhumbled, unconverted,) because it seeth him not, neither knoweth [illegible] pride of men's hearts, in the ignorance and darkness [illegible] prevents their receiving him. And furthermore, [illegible] Word informs us, that the natural man receiveth [illegible] the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto [illegible] know them, because they are spiritually discerned. [illegible] come humbly to God, and beg to be enlightened. [illegible] divine Spirit, without his teachings, and without [illegible] earnest prayer, which is a habit of life and faith,

into which the Holy Spirit always leads the heaven-taught soul, it is impossible to arrive at the truth; and all the knowledge a man boasts in such a case, and all the perfection of philosophy, and all the lights of science and speculation, are but miserable presumption. The soul, in the neglect of prayer, and of God's Spirit, cannot but go astray.

> And while she dotes, and dreams that the believes,
> She mocks her Maker, and herself deceives.
> Her utmost reach, historical assent,
> The doctrines warped to what they never meant.
> The truth itself is in her head as dull
> And useless as a candle in a skull.

Hence, it is no wonder that Paul cautioned the world of believers in Christ against pretended philosophic instruction from such sources. Beware lest any man spoil you, through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. The moment a man, be he a minister of the Word, or a private Christian, begins to mind tradition and philosophy, instead of Christ, or to mingle up tradition and philosophy as parts of his Christianity, that moment he begins to be spoiled. And when a man undertakes to teach and feed others with philosophy and tradition, instead of the pure milk of the Word in Christ and him crucified, he is not only securing his own starvation, but he is starving others. He feedeth on ashes; a deceived heart hath turned him aside; and curious it is to see how a man, by eating ashes himself, can persuade others also that ashes are good food. This mixture of philosophy with the bread of life, and the strong and frequent warnings against it in God's Word, remind us of the descriptions of a worthless piety in the minor prophets. "Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people; Ephraim is a cake not turned." Paganism and Christianity together, and even that mixture half-baked, have generally constituted the piety of the so-called philosophers of this world. And the great work of philosophy in all ages has been, to *spoil* the truth. And this, not always because of the badness of the philosophy, or its error, but because of setting it upon the throne, appointing it as judge. But God has determined that there shall nothing occupy the throne of God and reason in man, save only the Lamb that was slain. There shall be a simple faith in him, casting down imaginations, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. Philosophy must ever be the handmaid, not the mistress nor the judge.

And as to progress in theology, there can be no such thing but by experience. Theology itself is a production of life, of the Spirit with the Word, in hearts quickened out of the death of trespasses and sins, and new created in Christ Jesus. And all *progress* in theology must be the product of life, not of mere learning; for without the inward teachings and life-giving power of the Holy Spirit, men are ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth—a phenomenon in modern times most remarkably mani-

fested, since the passing away of the first power of the Reformation, in Germany. One such theologian as Martin Luther, with the heart in a flame towards God by the divine Spirit, one such living theologian as Jonathan Edwards or John Howe, would be worth all the theological learning and learned men of modern Germany put together.

Philosophy may possibly correct philosophy, but it cannot teach theology. It may grub up stumps, but it can never sow the seed of the Gospel. Philosophy may preoccupy the mind with such error, that all the power even of a living theology can hardly expel it. But if a nation's theology is made up not out of experience in God's Word by God's Spirit, but mainly out of theory and speculation, if it has been the work of acute intellects without faith, without regeneration, or if such minds have been the main sources of it, it can be worth little or nothing either to teach the truth or contend against error. A vast proportion of what has been called theology in our world has been thus spoiled.

The time consumed in the vanities of mere philosophy, had it been given to spiritual discipline, and to the study of God's Word in God's light, would have made great deeps of living theology for a world to draw upon. But men have often done with God's Word, as foolishly as a band of miners would do before a mountain of gold, if instead of going down into the mines and working, they should speculate at the surface, about the abstract properties and purities of ore, the probable extent of seams, and the geological structure of creation. Just so, men work upon speculative difficulties in God's Word, instead of digging out the gold and using it. Instead of delving in the unsearchable riches of Christ, and coming to him to get rid of sin, they speculate about the origin of sin. Instead of coming to him to see more of his glory, and feel more of the power of his cross, they set up the speculation whether that glory, and the cross itself, be not, simply and merely, a grand, effective, passionate work of art!

Men are often exceedingly hampered by their philosophy, made hesitating, fearful, and incredulous. And the importance of a right mental philosophy, a mental philosophy of spiritual and not materializing tendencies, can hardly be overrated. A false philosophy may come, telling you that you can have no idea of eternity, but that of time multiplied, and no idea of God, but that of an infinitely enlarged man, and no idea of duty, but that of expediency; and if you should set up this philosophy, as your guide or judge in the application of divine truth, you would be mightily weakened in the presentation of eternity, of God, and of duty to the mind. Your only philosophy in such a case, even supposing you know no other system of human philosophy than the one thus palmed upon you, ought to be that of faith in God, and in God's Word. That, and that alone, carries you high and dry over all conflicting systems of philosophy and science, the Word of God being addressed directly

to the human conscience in precisely the same way, whether that conscience lie in the bosom of the philosopher or the fool.

But indeed we are all fools until the Word of God, by the Spirit of God, humbles us, and makes us wise. That is for us the real philosophy of heaven, the highest wisdom of earth, the profoundest exercise of the human intellect, to bow in self-denial and humility before God. If any man among you will be wise, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

A man educated in a false philosophy in regard to the will, or any part of our spiritual being, if he sets up that philosophy as his judge of divine truth is sure to go wrong. Some of the greatest minds ever created in our world have stumbled in God's Word over the logs laid down by such a false philosophy, at the threshold of some of the clearest truths revealed for our guidance. Nor can this evil be cured by the conflict of an opposite philosophy, but only by compelling philosophy to take its place as the servant and not the master, the learner, and not the judge. A good philosophy as well as a bad one may lead the mind astray, may cause the soul to stumble, if it set up to be the judge, either of the truths of God's Word, or the workings of God's Spirit. Your philosophies and your speculations must be put by themselves, whatever question you are raising, when you come to ask, what does God tell you in the Scriptures? But speculative men are unwilling to put their own theories and philosophical speculations at the feet of Christ. Men often use their systems of philosophy, just as we use blinders on our horses, so that they may see only straight forward. They put on their philosophy, tighten the reins, crack the whip, and away; and no side view or object is noticed, or permitted to interfere. Their philosophy, like a dark lantern, permits them to see only what is straight before it, only what they please to have it shine upon.

Now all regard to philosophy, in the application of God's Word, is injurious, and very likely to weaken the power of it. It ought to come, just what it is, supreme from God, sharper than any two-edged sword, sweeping all before it. You have no questions to ask of philosophy, and if philosophy puts questions to you, and you have a passage from God's Word that answers them, *that* decides the matter; if not, the difficulties raised by philosophy have no more to do with your application of God's Word, than the question how the meat got into a walnut-shell has to do with your eating it. In the use of the Scriptures, you are to have no philosophy but faith, and with that you are to apply God's Word to the conscience, without any care for philosophy, be it what it may.

There is nothing further to be said where God has spoken. If you believe in the law of God as his Word, it is to you supreme, decisive, whoever, or whatever may be brought against it. If you *do not* believe in God's Word, it is to you as worthless as philosophy itself; nay, it is to you the greatest lie the universe ever has

held. But, indeed, if you *do not* believe in God's Word, you fling yourself the lie in the face of your Maker; for he has declared that whoever believeth not the record God hath given us of his Son, hath made God a liar. So decisive and despotic is the obligation of belief, when God has spoken; and so independent and self-evidenced is God's Word, like his own attribute of self-existence.

Therefore, you are to run careering through all men's opinions, with God's Word, no matter what you go over. In executing God's commission in the application of divine truth, you need take no more notice of the panoply of philosophy, with which men may have armed themselves, than the chariot of paternal Deity took notice of the shields and helms, and helmed heads, over which it rode in victory. God's Word has God's authority, not yours, nor philosophy's, nor is it to be put under philosophy's jurisdiction, nor cut, nor squared, nor quartered, according to philosophy's measurement, nor graduated according to philosophy's fluctuating vagaries or imagined discoveries.

You are to preach God's Word with God's authority. If you do, from the heart, in simple faith, God will honor you. If you do not, but are afraid, and think you must first consult philosophy, whether what God says is to be plainly spoken and admitted, then philosophy itself, in the end, will dishonor you. He that exalts God's Word, God's Word will exalt him. And no matter whom you have to deal with, be it a body of philosophers themselves, fresh from the cobwebs of their chambers, or be it the mass of common minds; the Word of God is the same thing for all, and nothing else will have power. The foolishness of preaching pleases God, and whether it pleases men or not, nothing else will move them, will conquer them. A man like John Bunyan, preaching God's Word, without any philosophy, or knowledge of any, nay, perhaps not knowing the meaning of the word philosophy; a man preaching thus, from deep, powerful, all-quickening, all-mastering experience, even among the Germans themselves, would have mighty power. There might be those so entrenched behind their atheistic philosophic systems, or so entangled in them, that there would be no breaking through; but over multitudes such preaching would have irresistible power. And such a preacher would have no *more* power, nor so much, over the philosophers, even if he could attack them on their own chosen ground, with the clashings of the newest, truest, and best philosophies in existence. So Paul preached among the Jews, Greeks, and Romans, utterly heedless of their many-colored, manifold, and many-armed philosophies, whatever they might be. What did he care for them? Had he wished, or had he chosen, or had God so chosen for him, he could have made as great and learned a hubbub as any of them, with Greek, Roman, Jewish, and Oriental philosophies. But he went at them with only the story of the cross, Jesus Christ and him crucified, simply that; nothing else. It was the story of the cross, not of the man without

the cross; not Christ the glorious being of godlike life and character, of pure and lofty teaching, philosophy, and example; nor Christ the manifestation of Divine Love in humanity; that would have pleased both Jews and Greeks; they would have hailed that, as glorious. God Incarnate, let alone the humiliating features of the Gospel, would have been a theme for an exceedingly popular philosophy and eloquence. But Christ crucified, Christ dying on the cross between two thieves, presented a theme of mere ridicule and scorn to all the world; to all, whose hearts were not beginning to be touched and troubled by the Spirit of the Saviour. Yet Paul drove on, in his exclusiveness, with nothing but Christ and *him crucified*, to the Jews a stumbling-block, to the Greeks foolishness. He made that very foolishness the beginning and end of his earnestness, the sum and substance of his argument, albeit he were addressing Greeks, Jews, or Romans. He rode in upon them with God's Word; he rolled over them with the chariot of the Gospel. Sometimes they stood up again after the incursions of this strange and fiery eloquence, merely astounded for the moment, to perish in their mockery; but many were discomfited, conquered, and brought to their senses, who had been all their life-long insane in philosophy and sin. Paul kept up, through his whole life, this freshness of preaching Christ from the heart. He urged the same upon his fellow-christians; he bequeathed the same, as his dying legacy, to Timothy.

And it was because it came from the heart, that it never lost its freshness and its power. You might have heard Paul, the first year of his preaching after the journey to Damascus, and you would have heard of Christ and him crucified; and if you heard him thirty years after that, it would still be the same ever-glorious, everlasting theme, and none other—Christ and him crucified; and as fresh the thirtieth year, or the five hundredth year, if Paul could have lived so long, as when he first began to say of Christ, "Who loved me and gave himself for me." It was because along with the intrinsic and amazing greatness and comprehensiveness of the theme, in Paul's inspired vision, it was ever the fresh outpouring of a grateful, loving heart. And what must have been the sermons of the man, who could write such vast and glorious descriptions and appeals, as are contained in the epistle from which our text is drawn! It was the obligation of such preaching that he enjoined on all others; it was the legacy of such preaching, and the mantle of such power, that he left, I say, to Timothy, charging him by the Lord his Redeemer, that he never should be striving about words to no profit, but that he should preach THE WORD, in season and out of season. He could not endure to have anything presented as Christian truth in the place of Christ and him crucified. Beware lest any man spoil you, by preaching which is *not after Christ.*

Another of Paul's rules, intimately connected with the text, and serving as a guide and safeguard against the danger marked in it,

was this, namely, that Christians should never handle the Word of God deceitfully, *but by manifestation of the truth, commending themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.* Paul's object was to manifest the truth, to open it, to make all wonder at its exceeding riches. He would not change it, nor restrict, nor conceal it, through philosophy and vain deceit, nor put tradition in its place, nor any of man's rudiments. Some commentators and preachers work hard *to keep the meaning in*, cut it down, restrain it, keep it from shining, make you see just as little in it as possible. Then instead of it, they bring up the great loads of their philosophy and learning. Or rather, they spike the guns of God's Word, and then roll forward their tumbrels of philosophy, and baggage wagons of erudition, as if the battle were to be gained by those, and not by God's artillery.

Others there are again, who handle the Word of God deceitfully, by not rightly dividing it, by cutting off perhaps half of a truth, and throwing it away, or suffocating it with philosophical speculations. Some treat the very *centrality* of the Gospel, Christ and him crucified, in this manner. Some will take the great, beaming, radiant doctrine of the atonement by the sufferings and death of Christ, and cutting off the whole matter of sufferings and death, and the whole amazing manifestation of God's righteousness and justice in the pardon of the believer, as displayed in that propitiatory sacrifice, or resolving it into the play of a dramatic exhibition, dwell only on the character and life of Christ, and make the incarnation a manifestation merely of love, and not what God affirms it to be, a propitiation, that he might be just, and yet justify the guilty and the lost. Thus, while Christ is apparently brought forward, Christ crucified is quite put in the background, and the cross and death of Christ, instead of being the grand reality in that amazing scene and system of redemption, and the power of God in arresting and saving the soul, dwindles to a mere circumstance, a mere adjunct, taken up by the way. Now by whatever words or theories such a treatment of God's Word is covered, it is handling the Word of God deceitfully, and not by manifestation of the truth, but concealment of it, by philosophy and vain deceit. Beware lest any man so spoil you, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and *not after Christ.*

Others again, instead of Chirst and him crucified, present, as the main burthen and intent of the Gospel, the church and its ordinances, after the tradition of men. Some go so far, even in the Protestant communion, as to adopt the antichristian and Papal maxim, that it is through the church that we come to Christ, and not through Christ only that we come into the church. This is a dogma which has been the perdition of thousands upon thousands, and will be of thousands more. It is a word which eateth as doth a canker. It eats into the heart of the church of Christ, and devours all true piety, where it prevails, while at the same time it makes

the church big in visibility, organization, ordinances, forms, and the pomp of circumstance and power. But why, says the Word of God, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances after the commandments and doctrines of men, as if the church were a mere worldly corporation? These are profane and vain babblings, that will increase unto more ungodliness. And certainly a church that undertakes to constitute itself in Christ, by virtue of its organization, as a church historically apostolic, and then sets up the dogma that men can be in Christ only by being in the church, is but a shadow cast by the true body of Christ; or rather, it is a merely fleshly body, vainly puffed up by a fleshly mind, and not holding the Head, the Lord Jesus, from whom all the body, by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. A church proclaiming that men must come to Christ by the church, increaseth with the increase of men, but not of God. Under such a sign and dogma of tradition and world rudiment, men that come into the church to get to Christ, stop *with* the church, and go no further, and are likely, under the anodynes of ordinances, never to gain Christ. For along with this error comes in that other deceivableness of unrighteousness and frustration of the grace of God, anwering to the Jewish tenet of circumcision as the gate of heaven, against which Paul thundered such fiery anathemas—the tenet of baptismal regeneration—rendering the grace of God of none effect, and justification by faith a dead and useless doctrine. It may be laid down as a rule infallible, that whoever trusts in any church, or in any ordinance, or in any creature, to bring him to Christ, or to put him in Christ, will never find Christ, will never come to Christ. He never will, so long as this delusion lasts. And thus it was that Paul, by God's commission, launched the bolts of such a fiery vengeance against those who thus corrupted the church and the Word of the living God. I tell you, said he, that Christ is become of none effect unto you, whosoever ye be, that trust in such things; ye are fallen from grace. If you be baptismally regenerated, and trust in that, you will never be regenerated in any other way, and Christ can profit you nothing. If you trust to get to heaven, because you are the children of the church and of Abraham, God will sooner people heaven from the stones in the streets, than admit you there, by such contempt, nullification, and falsification of the cross of Christ. Let no man beguile you of your reward by such things. As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they make much of such things, and glory in them. But God forbid that we should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto us, and we unto the world. For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

Now, in one way and another, the world is full of these errors,

corrupting the truth, deluding the soul, and deadening the Word of God. Some of these errors are like a breastwork of cotton, before a beleaguered city, in which all the balls of an invading army may be buried, and never one reach the walls, or houses, or people of the city. Just so, the very arrows of God's truth fall blunted before hearts thus entrenched by the elastic rudiments of the world, by the traditions, and commandments, and doctrines of men. And therefore it was, and is, that our blessed Lord, in the New Testament and in the Old, always did, and still does, speak with such devouring indignation against those who make paths to heaven which he has not made, and set up gates and sign-boards to heaven, of their own construction, which are gates to hell; making the commandment of God of none effect, through their tradition. Ye hypocrites! in vain do ye worship me. Ye blind leaders of the blind! Ye that beguile, and they that are beguiled, shall both fall into the ditch. It was because these dogmas and ordinances of men are the source of fleshly arrogance, persecution, and pride, the denial of the cross, the destruction of faith, the perversion of the Word of God, the corruption of the church, the delusion and destruction of the soul!

Now our subject, and this text, out of which it has directly grown, shows you what you are to find in God's Word—Jesus Christ and him crucified; what constitutes the worth of God's Word—Jesus Christ and him crucified; for what you are to cherish, study, and prize God's Word—Jesus Christ and him crucified; and how you are to study God's Word—in Christ and him crucified, in the light of his cross, and by the teachings of his Spirit. If you do not find Christ in the Word, and life and immortality only through him, the Word, with all its glory, will be of no use or efficacy with you, save in your condemnation. And our blessed Lord himself has said, that the Word which he has given unto you, and spoken to you, *that* shall judge you at the last day.

But if you *do* find Christ in it, then you will ever value it in and for Christ. You will love it for its clear, decisive, glorious manifestation of Christ and him crucified. You will be watchful against all handling of the Word of God deceitfully, to mar the glory, beauty, and completeness of that doctrine. You will be jealous of all philosophy and vain deceit, and all the traditions of men, and all the rudiments of the world, and all the speculations of intruding fleshly minds, that would beguile you from the simplicity of your faith, and make you distrust or forget your completeness in Christ. You will be anxious to study the Word of God in God's light, by the guidance, interpretation, and indwelling life of God's Holy Spirit. It is he, the Spirit of Christ and of the Father, the Messenger of the Father and the Son, who is to lead you into all truth, to sanctify you by the truth, and in so doing, and in order so to do, taking of the things that are Christ's—not man's—and showing them to your souls. You will rely, not upon the enticing words of

man's wisdom, but upon the demonstration of the Spirit and of power. You will love Paul's exclusiveness—"*I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified.*" And in proportion as you love and imitate that, because your love, like Paul's, is set only upon Christ, in that proportion will you also know and love the comprehensiveness and the glory of Paul's prayers; and the great strife of *your* prayers, the fire and life of your study of the Word, will be "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." And thus he will "grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length, and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. And unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

VI.

CHRIST AS A MECHANIC.

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"Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses, and of Juda and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him."—MARK vi. 3.

GOD in the execution of his designs follows a course which differs widely from that which human wisdom would have suggested. Man is impatient; he burns with a restless desire to see his plans immediately accomplished, and hardly conceives of an important object before he rushes impetuously to secure it. Hence he often mistakes both as to the character of the end and the adaptation of the means, and, as a natural consequence, reaps bitter disappointment where he expected a harvest of success. God, on the other hand, forming his purposes in infinite wisdom, and dwelling amid the ages of eternity, where "one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," acts without rashness, without impetuosity, without haste, and with unerring certainty. When the great design of human redemption was formed, man's wisdom, could it have been consulted, would have suggested the propriety and importance of having the atonement made immediately. He would have had the cross planted by the very gate of Paradise, that as the guilty pair issued from the garden, they might behold the vicarious sufferer opening the way for their return to life. Yes, human reason would have had the whole world pointed to an actual expiation from the very beginning, that each successive generation might have lived and died amid the noonday refulgence of gospel light. God thought otherwise. Infinite wisdom was not hasty in its efforts. To the divine mind there was in the future a "fulness of time," when it would be appropriate for the Saviour to appear and to enter upon his astounding mission. That fulness of time involved, as the event proved, a lapse of four thousand years. We may not comprehend, even after the fact, all or any of the reasons which had weight with God, but we may be certain that no mistake was made, and no fault committed. He whose moral nature is summed up in *Love* had surely a deep interest in pursuing the course that would

ultimately tend to the greatest good of his creatures, nor would he have delayed the actual work of atonement for forty centuries, if there had not been sufficient and benevolent reasons.

The text is connected with another illustration of a kindred nature, of the difference between the divine and human mode of procedure. Men are fond of parade. They love ostentation, and if engaged in a great design, plan to have the arrangements and instrumentalities splendid and imposing, that the stamp of greatness may be visible through the whole affair. They are not content to have the result speak for itself, and announce its own magnitude and importance, but must herald its praises and celebrate its majesty in every preliminary step. It is not so with God. He loves, even amid his mightiest operations, and in the execution of his noblest designs, to conceal his greatness. Often in the review of past events are we forced to say in the words of the prophet, "There was the hiding of his power." This principle of the divine procedure was strikingly announced by the Saviour, when he said, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." Men love to speak amid the stormy wind, the earthquake, and the fire; but the utterance of God is in "the still small voice." Had men been consulted with reference to the manner in which God should become manifest in the flesh, they would probably have recommended a glorious and triumphal descent from heaven, that should strike the nations with astonishment and awe, and secure universal submission. They would have considered no other theophany worthy of the Infinite Being, or adapted to secure the end contemplated in the redemption of a fallen world. And here, as before, God was of a different opinion, and sent his Son into the world in a lowly and humble manner, or as the apostle expresses it, "in the form of a servant." I wish on the present occasion to draw attention to this fact, and to certain lessons which it is fitted to impart.

I. *Let us consider the earthly position which the Saviour assumed.* When the great scheme of human redemption was devised, it was determined that the Saviour should assume the nature of the race that was to be saved, and should be born of a virgin mother. But who was the mother? From what family was she selected? Which of the royal daughters of earth was worthy to give birth to the promised Messiah? Was the choice made from the family of the Roman emperor? or of the kings innumerable who were his allies or tributaries? No: the mother of Jesus was neither queen nor princess. Was she then of noble race, numbered among the titled and wealthy of society? She was indeed of high and even royal extraction, in so far as centuries before her ancestors had been the monarchs of Judah and Israel, but as to her immediate and proximate relatives, they were probably all obscure and poor. Nothing definite is known of the early worldly position of Mary, the mother of Jesus; but as she married a

humble mechanic, and during her whole life seems to have lived in straitened circumstances, such was probably her condition from birth. That she was poor after marriage is evident from several incidental facts in the gospel history. The Jewish law made it the duty of parents to present their young infants, especially the first-born, to the Lord, with an accompanying offering. This offering was mercifully graduated to their worldly condition. Those in ordinary prosperity were required to bring a lamb for a burnt-offering, and a young pigeon for a sin-offering; but with regard to the poor it was thus commanded, "And if she (the mother) be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtle doves, or two young pigeons." In the gospel of Luke we have an account of the presentation of the infant Jesus with the appropriate sacrifice. "And when the days of her purification acoording to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord, ... and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons." From this statement it will be seen that the offering of Mary or Joseph was the one prescribed for the poor. The language of the text conducts us to the same conclusion. In the course of his journeys, after he entered upon his public ministry, Jesus came to the district of country around Nazareth, where he had been brought up. On the Sabbath he entered the synagogue, and, to the astonishment of all who were present, began to teach the people and work miracles. Their astonishment, however, soon gave place to indignation, and they exclaimed, "From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him." What was the difficulty with these hearers? They were unwilling to be taught by a man of such humble extraction, whose father, as Matthew relates it, was a carpenter, and whose mother, brethren, and sisters, were known to be among the common people. From the known poverty of his parents, and the consequently limited opportunities of Jesus for acquiring information in the usual manner, they were amazed at the wisdom and intelligence which he displayed, and soon their pride rebelled against sitting under the instruction of a teacher so thoroughly plebeian, upon whose family they had been accustomed to look down as unworthy of regard, because of their poverty. We read, also, that when Jesus hung upon the cross he committed his mother to the care of John, who took her to his own house; from which we may infer, that Joseph was dead, and that Mary was left in destitute and dependent circumstances. Such then was the family of whose number the Son of God was. Unknown to fame, people of common life, supporting themselves by manual labor, and counted

among the poor. It will not be unreasonable if we suppose that all the playmates of the Saviour's childhood, and all the associates of his adult years were of the same humble class, so that his companions were laborers, mechanics, and artisans, while into the abodes of the rich he seldom entered, and with their refined and proud inmates scarcely ever came in contact, until his public life commenced.

Having thus scanned the circumstances of those who surrounded Christ, let us now notice his own position and rank. And here we find another illustration of the calmness, self-possession, and moderation of God, as compared with the rash haste and impetuosity of man. Man would not only have executed the plan of atonement centuries before the time chosen by God, but he would have inducted the Saviour into office at once, that no time might be lost. Of what use could it be to have him pass through the protracted periods of infancy, childhood, and youth? Why not send him into the world full of manhood as in the case of Adam? Then his divine origin would be undeniable, as none among mankind could claim to be his parents. But if he must be born as a babe, and grow up to adult years in the same gradual manner as others, let him enter as soon as possible upon his appointed work, and begin his ministry with incipient, or at least with complete manhood. But all this plausible reasoning seemed folly to the divine mind. God knew the perishing condition of the world, and how much such a preacher as Christ was needed; and yet he went forward in his plans with deliberation and coolness. The promised Saviour appeared as a babe, and not as a man; he grew up to maturity with no greater rapidity than other children, and except the remarkable occurrence at the temple, when he was twelve years of age, and engaged in discussion with the doctors of the law, he gave no indications of his future greatness, beyond the unexampled purity of his life. Not till thirty years had elapsed did he enter upon his public ministry. And how were those thirty years of private life spent? Were they years of profound study and meditation? Did he lead the life of a recluse, preparing himself for his lofty mission? Did he place himself under the instruction of some noted Rabbi, to be qualified for the work of a public teacher? Not at all. On the contrary, he mingled with his fellow-men, and was one of the people, engaged in active industry. During that long period he pursued the trade of a carpenter. Nay, start not back in horror and disgust, ye delicate despisers of honest labor, who think that human fingers were only made to twirl a cane, to handle bank-notes, or possibly to guide a pen. It is even so. The Lord of glory was a carpenter. Those hands which with a touch opened the eyes of the blind and unstopped the ears of the deaf, which were so often raised to bless the little children, and the thronging multitudes, and were at last nailed to the cross when the sacrifice was offered for a world's sin, had for years handled the saw, the

chisel, and the plane. It was natural that Joseph should bring up his reputed son to the same trade with himself, especially as they were poor, and the labor of each member was necessary to the comfort of the family, and as it was also the custom of Jewish fathers to teach their sons some useful handicraft. But, beside this inherent probability to guide our opinion, we have the distinct reference of the text to the Saviour's well-known occupation. The people of Nazareth had been familiar with his life and habits from childhood. They were acquainted with the whole family, and were well informed with reference to their affairs; as much so, as the inhabitants of any country town are with respect to those of their neighbors. Hence when Jesus began to teach in the synagogue, they exclaimed in surprise, "Is not this the carpenter?" As though they had said, "How comes this man to be an instructor of the people? Whence are his qualifications?" Have we not seen him ever since childhood, laboring as a carpenter, the trade of his father before him? It is but a few months since he quitted the place, a plain mechanic, and now he has set up for a prophet! Away with the upstart!" Thus did those who had been most familiar with him marvel and become indignant, while Jesus quietly replied, in words that were probably current as a proverb, "A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house." Nothing more strikingly depicts the obscurity of Christ's early life, and the lowliness of the position which he assumed, than this natural astonishment and human-like anger and envy of his townsmen. How true is the declaration of Paul, when describing the voluntary humiliation of the Saviour, he says, "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but (yet) made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." It would have been unspeakable condescension, had Christ assumed human nature as the son of a king, and consented to succeed his father on an earthly throne. What was it, then, when he became the son of a mechanic, and himself labored for thirty years as a carpenter?

II. *Let us attend to certain practical truths which connect themselves with the fact stated in the text.* Simple as the narrative is, both as to style and subject matter, it is fruitful in important suggestions, among which are the following:—

1. Confidence is to be placed in all the plans of God. Often, during the history of the human race, has he pursued a course which was mysterious to finite mind, and served to confound the received views of the divine benevolence and wisdom; but the result has invariably proved that God saw the end from the beginning, and chose that method of procedure which was best adapted to promote his own glory and the welfare of his intelligent creatures. It was certainly not to have been expected that the revelation of God in man should have been made through so obscure a personage as the son of Mary—that the divine nature should have been

united with the reputed offspring of Joseph the mechanic; yet such was the fact. It was as little, if not less, to have been expected that the long-promised Messiah, who was to reign over the nations, should have been trained among the poor, and should have labored until his thirtieth year as a common carpenter; yet this was true also. *We* should not have ordered it so; but "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." God beheld prospectively, what we can now to some extent see retrospectively, that important results depended upon the course actually pursued. By assuming so lowly a position, Christ identified himself with the mass of mankind, who are poor, and thus created a bond of attraction between himself and them, since his object was not merely to benefit the powerful, and the wealthy, who are the favored few, but chiefly the weak, destitute and neglected, who are the suffering many. This humiliation of the Saviour was intended also to bring out the purity and benevolence of his character. It was great self-denial, for so pure a being to mingle for thirty years with the rude, vulgar, and vicious crowd, whose tastes and pleasures were so opposite to his own; and nothing but disinterested and self-sacrificing benevolence could have led to it. Such an obscure origin and early life were also necessary to illustrate the spirituality of his kingdom, and to dispel the vain expectations of temporal triumph which the Jews connected with the advent of the Messiah. It was difficult, as it was, to banish worldly illusions from the minds of his disciples, but it would have been impossible had Christ appeared in some family of rank and wealth, and been introduced to a position of power and fame. Moreover, his humble, toilsome, and obscure life was intimately connected with the atonement, which was to be made for the world's sin, if it did not constitute in fact a part of it. It is safe to suppose that everything of the nature of humiliation, toil, and self-denial in the life of Christ was part of the price paid for the ransom of this fallen race. We can see, at least, how appropriate a preparation it was for the sad close, that a life of sorrow should precede a death of pain; and also how it placed the Saviour in circumstances in which his death could be readily brought about. He was a poor man, of obscure parentage, without relatives or friends among the rich, and thus fell an easy prey to the powerful scribes and pharisees. These things are now plain, and fully justify the divine wisdom and benevolence. Let us learn from it, never to distrust the divine plan. All the purposes of God respecting us or others are right in themselves, and sure to be accomplished by the most appropriate means, notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary.

2. Let us learn that nothing is ever lost by wise caution, deliberation, and patience. As has already been remarked, man is rash and impulsive, while God is cool and deliberate, even to apparent slowness. God never strikes till the proper time arrives, but then the blow is heavy and effectual. He often takes centuries to pre-

pare for a single important event, where man would scarcely have desired as many days; and this not from a lack of knowledge and power, but from the perfection of both. He took four thousand years to prepare the world for the advent of Christ, which late period is quietly denominated in the Bible, "the fulness of time!"

So also the entrance of Christ upon his public ministry was delayed until his thirtieth year, and he who was to be the great Teacher and Redeemer, was all that time laboring as a mechanic. What a waste of time! man is ready to exclaim. How unwise, that out of less than thirty-four years of life, thirty should be occupied with the work of a carpenter! How much better had he entered upon his spiritual labors at the age of twenty, so as to have secured ten years of added instruction for the people. God reasoned differently, and, anxious as he was to promote human salvation, operated slowly. For wise reasons, even though mysterious to us, he preferred that Christ should tarry at the carpenter's bench, until the fulness of time had once more arrived. And thus, my hearers, there is with reference to everything, a fulness of time; and while the heart should be interested in the rapid advancement of God's cause, it is the province of the head to see that cautious and well-digested measures are employed at precisely the right juncture. Christians are prone to be rash and inconsiderate in their efforts to do good. Young men are often anxious to enter the ministry before they are thoroughly qualified as to maturity of mind, the discipline of their powers, or the extent of their knowledge. They feel as though the world was perishing for lack of God's truth, and that it was necessary for them to rush at once into the ministerial office, as though God's cause rested solely upon them, and the exigencies of the world forbade delay. There is quite as much self-ignorance, self-conceit, and pride in such views, as there is holy zeal or piety. In like manner, churches are prone to rash measures and inconsiderate action. They first wrongly conclude that the whole work of glorifying God is embraced in the conversion of sinners, and then that that work must be done up by steam power in the shortest possible space of time. Hence that policy and method of action will be pursued which promises the greatest apparent results of this one kind, in the briefest period, no matter what other relations of life are disturbed or neglected, and consequently what other duties are overlooked or denied. It has been truly said, and odious as the sentiment has appeared to many in past days, I adopt and defend it, "that souls may be saved at too dear a rate." If God had not thought so, Christ would never have spent thirty years as a mechanic. Every theory of religious action which in its zeal for present conversions tramples upon the great interests and principles involved in other relations and duties of life, costs ultimately more than it pays. There is no need of violent, hot haste. Christ never exhibited it. He was always calm, self-possessed, deliberate, cautious, and attentive to every

class of interests, physical, mental, and spiritual—those of the body and those of the soul—those of a domestic, and those of a public nature—those of time and those of eternity.

3. The subject suggests the thought, that true greatness and dignity reside in character, and not in social rank or relative employment. The commonly-received opinion is in opposition to this view. Men are regarded with reverence according to their wealth or rank, or the nature of their employment. Certain individuals are supposed to be entitled to regard and great outward respect, because they belong to the aristocracy of birth or of fortune, according as the country may be monarchical or republican. Others are thought to derive dignity and greatness from the peculiarity of their secular business, such as generals, judges, governors, legislators, presidents, and kings. So, on the other hand, the masses, who are of humble birth and laborious employments, are considered devoid of dignity and greatness. Common and almost universal as this doctrine is, it is equally absurd and antichristian. That the mere accident of birth, or the fact of relative position and employment, evinces the superiority of any man, is more than can be proved in a single case, while ten thousand facts abundantly disprove it in numberless instances. The Bible and common sense unite in declaring that true grandeur and nobility are found only in a pure character, and connect themselves only with the man who strives to glorify God, and to benefit his fellow-men to the best of his ability, in whatever station he may be placed by Providence. The humblest occupation becomes honorable and dignified, when made subservient to a right end. The Rev. John Newton remarked, that "True devotion equals things. Washing plates and cleaning shoes is a high office, if performed in a right spirit. If three angels were sent to earth, they would feel perfect indifference who should perform the part of prime minister, parish minister, or watchman." On another occasion, he observed, in a similar vein, that "If two angels came down from heaven to execute a divine command, and one was appointed to conduct an empire, and the other to sweep a street in it, they would feel no inclination to change employments." Peter the Great, autocrat of Russia, never was in so sublime a position, as when, in order to acquaint himself with ship-building, and to introduce it into his dominions, he went in disguise to the Dutch village of Saardam, and labored there as a common workman, in a shipyard, under the name of Peter Michaeloff. Paul laid aside none of his true dignity and greatness, when, in the intervals of his apostolic labor, he turned to his old trade of tent-making, rather than be dependent on others. And thus the Lord Jesus Christ was as really evincing the grandeur of his character and person, while quietly laboring as a mechanic, as when, surrounded by entranced thousands, he rode in triumph into Jerusalem, or with divine power summoned the dead back to life. Angels, doubtless, gazed, year after year, with admiration on the

Son of God, as he veiled his glory in human form, and as an unpretending carpenter toiled amid the rough artisans of Nazareth. He was in the path of duty, and that is the path of greatness. His religion consisted not in attention to mere devotional exercises, such as prayer, singing, and attendance upon the synagogues, but it was the constant development of this sublime principle, *to please God in every act of life.* Hence, when he knew it was his heavenly Father's will that he should spend thirty years as a carpenter, he perfectly acquiesced in the arrangement. That was holiness, and that was also greatness, which would not have been increased had a crown been placed upon his head. Imitate this true, heroic grandeur, my hearers.

"Let foplings sneer, let fools deride,
Ye heed no idle scorner;
Free hands and hearts are still your pride,
And duty done, your honor."

4. It is a noticeable fact, that God often brings the grand actors of earth, those who mould human affairs, and leave their impress upon succeeding generations, from obscure positions. Had it been announced to the Jewish nation that their Messiah was in the world, they would never have thought of looking for him among the common people, and above all among those of Nazareth, who were supposed to be unusually devoid of ability. And yet there stood the Son of God, the Founder of a religion that has swayed for centuries the most enlightened nations of the earth, and is yet destined to become universal—there he stood, in the person of that humble carpenter, who wrought with such diligent industry by the side of his reputed father. And thus, centuries before, when God would anoint a king who should cause Israel to triumph over all its enemies, he sent Samuel the prophet to Bethlehem, and there, from the family of Jesse, chose the youngest, the mere stripling, who kept the sheep. When the Saviour had finished his work on earth, and would send forth a band of Apostles to lay the foundations of the church in all lands, whom did he choose, but a company of fishermen, gathered from the common people of Galilee? When, more than fourteen centuries after, he would reveal a new world to the astonished nations, and with it would start into new life the enterprise, commerce, arts, sciences, and religion of Europe, whom did he select as the grand pioneer, but Christopher Columbus, the son of a wool-comber, and in early life a sailor-boy upon the Mediterranean? When, a few years later, he would kindle anew the fires of truth and piety, amid the blackness of Romish night, and thus throw light over the world, who was designated to bear the torch of reformation, but Martin Luther, an obscure monk, and the son of a poor miner? I need not multiply examples. History is full of them, and whole volumes have been written to illustrate this providential arrangement. The middle and lower classes have, in fact, always been the hope of the world, and from them have

uprisen those benefactors of the race, who, as champions of the truth, have driven error from its strongholds. They are the vast storehouse of material, from which God draws forth, from time to time, the stout hearts and the mighty intellects that are needed to save and bless the world. The Jews despised the carpenter, who presumed to take upon him the office of Rabbi, and, as John informs us, contemptuously said, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" But God, who was in him, made him the most illustrious of teachers and the mightiest of monarchs.

5. Contempt for the poor and laborious, as such, is a sign of a weak head and of a wicked heart. There are not a few in every large community, who look with contempt upon the laboring classes, as though to be an operative were a disgrace. They consider labor disreputable, and idleness a mark of gentility. A mechanic is regarded with aversion, and denied his true social position. Who, among the rich men, thinks of inviting a mechanic and his family to a party, or of exchanging visits with them? What young lady, who counts herself refined, associates with the daughters of operatives, or would marry a mechanic? What! throw herself away on a mechanic, instead of marrying a merchant, or lawyer, or physician! Absurd! Now, I will admit that there is no impropriety in persons of education and refinement preferring the society of the cultivated and well-informed, and were it only the ignorance and rudeness of certain individuals that was avoided, no blame could be imputed; but it is not so. Very frequently, a mechanic, who is intelligent and truly cultivated and Christian, is denied a respectable social position, while some ignorant and dissipated dandy, who, like every idle man, is a nuisance in society, is honored and caressed. The truth is the very reverse of the views which usually prevail. He who is employed in a useful occupation, by which his family are honestly supported, and the general industry and thrift of the community are promoted, is worthy of respect and honor. He is adding something continually to the wealth of the world. What may be the precise nature of his business is of no account, whether he weave cotton cloth, or sell it; whether he shapes the glowing iron on the anvil, or offers it for sale in a hardware store; whether he makes shoes or sermons, repairs garments or mends shattered constitutions, tinkers metal or the state laws. A man ought to be judged and treated according to his moral worth, in the first place, and secondly according to the degree of his intelligence and cultivation; while mere wealth, office, family connections, dress, and foppish manners, should sink into their proper insignificance. What would these aristocratic despisers of mechanical labor have thought of Christ? For thirty years, he was nothing but a carpenter, not a very peculiar carpenter, a very genteel one—a master builder, perhaps—but a plain, humble, laboring joiner, who used the plane, the chisel, the saw, and the hammer—a man with rough hands, and in very ordinary clothes. Think you they would have received

him? Would they have nodded to him in the street? Would they have invited him to their social parties? I tell you, nay. Even after he had become a preacher of righteousness, they would have exclaimed with those in the text, "Is not this the carpenter?" and would have turned with disgust from his presence. And what shall we say, when this unreasonable and unchristian prejudice against the laboring classes is carried into the church of God, so that professors of religion refuse to unite with a church where mechanics attend? It is often the case, that those who profess to be the followers of Christ will pass right by a church that needs their aid, and in which they can make their influence felt, and can do much good, and will go to another church, where they are not needed, and where their influence is lost in the crowd; because the former is attended by the poor, and the latter by the rich! Would Christ do so? Do these proud professors really love him who was the carpenter of Nazareth, and who, even after he commenced his public ministry, was so poor that he had not where to lay his head? I tell you, my hearers, that if the Lord Jesus were to revisit the earth, he would consort with the poor rather than with the rich. Yes; and according to his own declaration, he who was for years a laborious mechanic, setting his fellow-men an example of industry, is now represented on earth by the laboring poor of his people; and he has said, with reference to their treatment, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." The whole system now so fully developed in our large cities, of building churches exclusively for the rich, separating them from the poor, is wrong, and the spirit of it, as exhibited in almost every city, is equally unchristian.

6. Christianity is the special friend of the laboring classes. Its divine Founder when on earth identified himself with the poor. He was for thirty years one with them, in toil and hardship, amid contempt and injury. During his public ministry he devoted special attention to that class, so that we read that "the common people heard him gladly," and that it was said of his labors, "The poor have the gospel preached unto them." The whole spirit of the gospel tends to bless the laboring classes. It comforts them under trials, encourages them amid toil, rebukes all attempts to defraud or oppress them, and tends to elevate their condition and to augment their happiness. He who was himself a mechanic has given to the world a religion for the million, and in all ages they have cheerfully responded to it, while the rich and powerful have perished in their pride. Christ said that "it was easier for a camel to pass through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven," while James declared that "God hath chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him." How little is this genius of Christianity understood. Ministers and churches are continually striving to adapt it to the rich and powerful, so as to gain

their favor, overlooking the poor who are the hope of the church. What cause of God has not been carried forward mainly by the poor, the middle and lower classes? What cause of God have not the rich and great opposed and vainly sought to crush? And yet the sympathies of many ministers and laymen is altogether with the latter. Such is not the spirit of Christianity. *That* gives its sympathies to those who need them, the toiling, struggling masses.

7. Let each learn to serve God contentedly in the calling in which Providence has placed him. Christ was willing to serve his Heavenly Father in any capacity, and willingly wrought for thirty years as a carpenter. We are prone to make a distinction in employments, as though some were holier than others; but, relatively to each man, his own proper business is the holiest, for it is the one which Providence has assigned, and in which God is best pleased with his labors. Thus Paul reasons, warning his readers against discontent, "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called being a servant? care not for it; but if thou mayest be made free use it rather. For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman; likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant." The particular employment is not so important, although some are more pleasant and profitable than others, as that it be pursued diligently honestly, and for the glory of God, according to our Saviour's example. In the language of one of our favorite poets, let us say and feel—

"In the darkness as in daylight,
On the water as on land,
God is ever looking on us,
And beneath us is His hand!
Death will find us soon or later,
On the deck or in the cot,
And we cannot meet him better
Than in working out our lot."

THE WAGES OF SIN.

"The wages of sin is death." Punishment follows close in the footsteps of crime. Sin and death are intimately allied. Eternal death is the eldest child of sin. In life, the wages of sin is material death; in eternity, perpetual exile from the presence of God, or everlasting destruction. When we sin, we close our eyes to the light; we are blind to the established fact, that the stipend of transgression is never-ending death—that the hire of sin is the loss of the soul. When we break the laws of God, we write our own epitaphs; we follow in the funeral train of our own eternal hopes; we abandon the contest and invite destruction; we acknowledge that we are sold to the Evil One, and court the wrath of God. Terrible aberration of mind.

The precursors of this dreadful death are, unsanctified sorrows; sickness which hath no spiritual consolations; poverty darkened by despair, and a keen and abiding sense of the loss of innocence, dear as breath at the hour of dying. A German philosopher once remarked, that he knew of but two beautiful things in the universe—the starry sky above our heads, and a sense of duty in our hearts.

This consciousness of guilt, or loss of innocence, is the frontier herald of eternal death. It springs from the recollection of a thousand solemn warnings—from parents and friends, from school-masters and holy ministers, from pulpits and Sabbaths, from open Bibles and the invocations of the pious, and finally, from the merciful visitations of Providence, almost periodical. Eternal hopes, the soul appears to have none; it only awaits the "wrath and indignation" which shall devour the adversary.

If such are the wages of sin, how shall we avoid the payment of them? Simple, yet beautiful and consolatory is the gospel reply. "But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Can I then avoid the wages of sin, and accept through the Holy Spirit, of the gift of God, exchanging eternal death for eternal life? Can I become an inmate of the kingdom of heaven, and escape the most dreadful of all evils, "*the wrath to come!*" Thanks be to God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

VII.

ROBBING GOD.

A FAST-DAY SERMON.

BY REV. E. N. KIRK,

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"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me."—MAL. iii. 8.

THE rights of property are held sacred by every civilized people, and, the dishonest appropriation of property held in trust, is a crime which they agree to abhor. But there is a species of robbery, or, more specifically, a breach of trust, which even civilized nations have not learned to condemn. It is that so severely rebuked in this passage; which we may denominate an indictment against a corporation of stewards. To understand it fully, we must refer to some peculiarities in the social organization of the Israelites. There is a remarkable connection here presented to our view, between temporal blessings and religious ceremonies, and a visiting of temporal judgments upon religious delinquencies is here threatened; which are not witnessed now. And there is also an importance attached here to sacrificial services, which, we are sure, was not founded on their intrinsic value. The Jewish government was entirely unique. Their God and their monarch were the same person; so that his moral government over them assumed a political form; and sins against the moral law were equally sins against the civil law. This explains the threatenings of temporal judgments for religious delinquencies. Here, for instance, were a drought and famine sent upon them for neglecting the services of religion. Under the dispensation of grace in the New Testament, it seems to many wonderful that so much importance could ever have been attached to the sacrifice of animals. But, besides the support of the whole religious system of the nation, which depended chiefly on the altar gifts; and, besides the typical value, or the profound instruction imparted by them in reference to the great doctrine of atonement, they were a loyal expression of homage to their Sovereign. And when the fire consumed the precious offering, it was a beautiful expression of God's acceptance of the gift, and of his festive participation with man in

the fruits of the divine bounty. Any abatement of zeal, therefore, in this department of civil and religious duty, was a virtual departing from their King and God; a species of constructive rebellion, which required a prompt and intelligible expression of the divine displeasure. The prophet Malachi therefore comes, as king's sheriff, to read the indictment in the hearing of the nation.

And now for a few moments we may be spectators of the trial. There had not been an utter abandonment of the forms of worship. But they had offered polluted bread on the altars of the Lord; they had betrayed an utter heartlessness in their ceremonies; they had turned the whole system of religion into a matter of commerce; they had brought the lame, and the sick, and the torn, to the sacrifice; they had withheld the King's tax, or the tithes on their produce. "Ye have robbed me," saith God. "Wherein?" is their reply. "In tithes and offerings." "But, we are visited with famine, and our flocks are cut off; how can we continue our rich offerings? Our herds and our corn have failed, how can he expect us to bring the best of our small produce in offerings to his temple? Let him now bless us again with abundance; and then will we bring again the tithes into the storehouse." This is their rejoinder. But hear the King's Attorney again; "You plead the consequences of your sin as the cause of it. Ye are cursed with a curse for this very reason, that when ye had abundance ye became selfish, and irreligious, and disloyal. This poverty, of which you now complain, would not have come upon you, had you not first forsaken God. Now, therefore, I come to plead the Lord's cause with you. There is yet room for a reconciliation with your offended sovereign, and for a reparation of this injury. Cease to plead falsely and vainly, to vindicate yourselves. Acknowledge your own delinquencies and God's justice; and now return to him. Yea, poor as you are, embarrassing as the course may be, meet his righteous claims. Bring the tithes into his storehouse; and see what your gracious Sovereign will do for you. You say you are willing to do your duty; that you do not wish nor intend to rob God. But you complain of poverty. Now bring the tithes; come, do your duty. Do not sit waiting for better times, but take the best you have, and bring it to the temple, and put the Lord to the test. Come, make the experiment, and see who is properly the cause of this curse and barrenness; the Lord or yourselves. Come, do your duty, though it takes your last stay from under you; and then see if he will not meet you and bless you."

Our attention is called in this passage to two facts pertaining to ourselves—that of God's exclusive ownership, and our breach of trust.

I. GOD IS THE EXCLUSIVE OWNER OF US AND OUR POSSESSIONS, TALENTS, AND OPPORTUNITIES.

What is ownership? A supreme right to enjoy the use of an

object according to one's own will. It is absolute, when no limit, but that will, exists. It is limited, when the rights of others put certain bounds to the right of use. Still the right of property is even then exclusive, as far as it goes. It is founded on a gift of the Creator—direct or indirect—as in the possession of our own faculties, a right to the air and the light of heaven; or to the returns of a bounteous Providence to the labor of our minds or bodies. It is also founded on a transfer of rights from some other owner, by gift, will, exchange, wages, or inheritance. These are the principal foundations of human ownership. God's are as different, and as much more elevated, as his nature is separate from, and lifted above ours. He has founded the laws of his empire upon his universal, absolute, and exclusive ownership. He has vindicated his treatment of his creatures by it; and he has condescended to show us the foundations of that right of property in everything that exists, and especially man.

1. *The first is creation.*—"The Lord hath made all things for himself. Of him, and through him, and to him are all things." That formula contains this principle in a brief, clear, and simple maxim, which ought to be repeated every day by every human being. And on that principle he vindicates his sovereign disposal of man: "Have I not a right to do what I will with mine own!" There are but two qualifications to this absolute proprietorship recognized in the scriptures. The one is, the restraint of those eternal principles of justice, to which it is the pleasure and the glory of Jehovah to conform. He has conferred certain rights on man, by endowing him with rational faculties and a responsible agency. These rights he will ever sacredly regard, in all his dealings with man. The other restriction is, that God's absolute proprietorship does not exclude a full proprietorship in particular things, to be vested in individual man. Still it is strictly stewardship, rather than ownership. The other foundation of this property is,

2. *Redemption.*—Some regard the death of Christ, as having no literal redemptive efficacy. But this is very certain, that he claims a special property in man on the ground of his having died for us. "To this end, Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. He died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them." This seems to be the reason for a special application of the title of Lord to him. He is the King of kings, and Lord of lords. All dominion, authority, power and property are subordinate to his dominion and ownership.

What then does the absolute owner claim of those in whom he has vested the possession, temporary or permanent, of property? That every one count himself a steward, and be faithful in his stewardship or agency. "No man liveth to himself; living or departed, we are the Lord's." His ends are to be accomplished by

us, to the sacrifice of all inferior ends. The power and possessions then entrusted to men, to be by them employed, each according to his ability, are various. And the proper use of them requires their entire consecration to God. They are

The supreme affection of the heart. There appears perhaps something incongruous in speaking of love to God as a matter of obligation. And yet it is the sum of all duty. It is the life of all other duties; without which God can accept of nothing. It is a very prevalent feeling with men, however, that there is nothing of any great moment in that summary of the law, "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God with all thy heart." Yet this is the first requirement of creatures whom he has endowed with faculties to apprehend and love him. This, so far from being secondary to any other duty, is paramount to all.

He claims the entire control of our wills. This is not to annihilate our wills; but to bring his outward law to supersede all inward impulses. The will cannot act independently of motive. The Law of God, as expressing his will, is one motive; the self-originating desires and purposes are another. To choose between these two, includes the sum of human responsibility, whether the choice is in view of the two objects in their most general form, or of any particular duty drawing in one direction, and inclination drawing in another direction. The claim of our Creator is, that we choose his law to control us in all things. He has the same claim to secure that result from his rational creatures, as man has to secure from a tree the peculiar fruit which it is capable of producing.

He claims our supreme confidence in him as our Saviour. This is a point not generally regarded in the light of an obligation. Every man who has heard the gospel with any degree of confidence in its being a message from God, believes that he has a right to look to God as a Saviour, if he is disposed to do so. But it is not common for men to feel the pressure of an obligation upon them to believe in Christ with supreme and grateful confidence. Yet this is his claim; and it is only another form of requiring supreme love, in view of this new aspect of divine character.

He claims the supreme efforts of men to advance his kingdom, and promote his glory on earth; each according to his capacity and opportunity. As the prayer is to be daily on our lips and in our hearts, "thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as in heaven; thy name be hallowed," so are we to be "always abounding in the work of the Lord." The spirit of loyalty must put itself forth in destroying the kingdom of Satan, by diffusing the light of heavenly truth, by sustaining and extending the institutions of religion, in every way in our power.

This is the required result of the agency and property with which God, our Creator, Redeemer, King, has entrusted us; this is the return which he expects from us.

We are then prepared to contemplate—

II. MAN'S FRAUDULENT APPROPRIATION TO HIMSELF OF GOD'S TREASURES.

It is seen—

1. *In his theory of morals.*—The importance of the doctrine of ownership is almost universally conceded. A large portion of the duties of social life refer to accurate distinctions on this subject. Human laws are constructed with the utmost care and wisdom, to fix the rights of ownership and determine precisely the limits of each man's property. If laws are wrong on this point, they trouble the order of society; if men's notions are wrong, or their sentiments lax on this subject, everything is out of order with them in their business transactions. Lax doctrines in regard to property are among the most dangerous influences in society. They sap its very foundations. If this subject had not been well understood by the framers of our constitution and laws, society, as it is in England and America, could not have existed. And as the heavens are higher than the earth, so is the importance of correct views of God's ownership on earth, above correct notions of property among men. And as it is found in human affairs that the most dreadful form of fraud and robbery is that which is founded on principle, and so carries public sentiment and the individual conscience with it, so is it in regard to the common notions men have of morality, virtue, honor and goodness. The true doctrine of God's supreme ownership is almost banished from human belief. High-minded, honorable men, that would die rather than betray a trust reposed in them, or fraudulently appropriate that which belongs to another, or to fail to meet the righteous claims of another, have no scruple in consulting their own feelings about the use of their time, property and talents, without the least reference to God. In a word, they have practically adopted the principle that God has no right to our affections, our service, our influence. It may be prudent to give such attention to religion as shall seem to be necessary for our own future welfare; but that is all the importance there is in it, in their estimation. The idea of a day of judgment, when they will be tried by a standard more rigid than what they esteem the fanatical requirements of the pulpit, is to them preposterous. It will never be required of them, they think, to have been as zealous in the cause of Christ as Paul; as fervent in love to him as John; as laborious and self-denying as the early martyrs. They have claims on God, very great; but he has none, or almost none, on them. This is the condition to which a fraudulent race has come. But are these notions true and just? Is it that God has given up all claim to us, our love and our service? If so, we should show the quit-claim, and thus answer all demands and accusations. I ask for it, where is it written; who ever heard it uttered? Produce your witnesses. Does it run thus: "I Jehovah, the maker of men, their unwearied benefactor, in whom they live and move, and have

their being, I do hereby annul, abolish and forever abandon all title, right, claim and demand to the supreme and fervent love of my intelligent creatures. They need not show me anything more than a decent respect; they need not depend particularly on my son for their salvation; nor labor very earnestly to spread his kingdom in the world. They shall not be required to pray very fervently for the outpouring of my Spirit and the coming of my kingdom. I do not require them to be much concerned about any other laws than those which preserve the order of civil society. I promise to defend their rights of property with all the power of my throne; and I will require of them to be very scrupulous, and exact, and honorable, about the rights of property between man and man; but my own rights I utterly and forever abandon, and I will never exact of them any regard to these rights. They may live so far as if there were no God, and no such thing as obligation to him; and if they only act honorably in all their transactions with men, I promise to welcome them to heaven?" One would be led to think, to see how sober-minded men live in regard to their Maker and Saviour, that they had seen or heard such a proclamation. But, if they have not, whence do they obtain those lax notions, so prevalent on this subject? Where do we find the popular notions about the rights of property? The ablest writers trace them to these four sources—instinctive sentiment—the history of civilization——the nature of property—the scriptures. But every one of these witnesses speaks, just as distinctly, some of them with abundantly more fulness in favor of God's right, than in favor of man's. Of the scriptures it would be almost superfluous to speak. They explain and defend man's rights; but with what majesty, solemnity and authority, do they assert that "all things, are of him and to him, who is over all, God blessed forevermore!" Refer we to the nature of the case. You go back to search for man's right of property; and you must at last come to God. Human law must rest for its foundation on natural religion, and on the law of Moses, which is the law of God. He conferred all the title man has to anything. Then his ownership is at last the foundation of all other ownership.

The claims of Jesus, the Lord of Redemption, are yet scarcely known in this world; much less admitted into its code of morals. The guilt of not believing on him is very rarely acknowledged. The robbery of not being a true and zealous disciple and servant of Christ is not believed very generally to be such. And yet men quite extensively hope that Christ will somehow save them at last. But they must all one day understand, that to reject Christ as Lord, is to reject him as Saviour. Conscience must be brought to the same sensitiveness in regard to God's rights, as man's. We shall then have no more worldly, Christless morality and self-complacent, applauded selfishness. But, if the theory of the world is bad,

2. *Its practice is still worse.*—Under this charge we must, in justice, make a division. There is a class who are guilty of robbing God, without any qualification or cessation. Another class are guilty to some extent. The first includes those who have some belief in God's existence as our Creator and benefactor. They cannot believe that he created them for no purpose. And they know that it is not that to which they are devoting their lives. Now there are three several ways of violating the rights of property—theft, violence, fraud. An agent generally does it by the first method; which is, secretly appropriating to his own use that which has been entrusted to him for the benefit of his employer. This is precisely what is going on continually in the world toward God. Every nine men out of every ten you meet, are probably stealing from God everything he has put within their power. Let us look at the inventory. He gave them hearts for fervent religious affections; devout communings with him, fervent aspirings after him; hearts capable of overflowing with delight and gratitude, especially at the exhibition of his mercy in Christ. But the probability is, that this proportion of the persons who pass you in the street, have never once seriously purposed to give their Creator and Saviour the full tribute of their heart's warmest affections. He demands the employment of their time for cultivating that holiness which chiefly pleases and honors him. But time is laid out, as if man were the original and sole owner and proprietor of it. He demands the consecration of all our social influence to promote his kingdom in the world. If that influence consists in wealth, station, talent, or any other instrument of power, what we have we hold as stewards. And whoever is appropriating them to selfish ends, or at best only to promote the temporal welfare of man, is robbing his employer; and if he denies that he is, he makes the case only the more hopeless.

Our position amid religious privileges, constitutes a part of our trust. "To whom much is given, of him shall much be required." Every human being in this and other lands where the Gospel shines freely, is responsible for his opportunities. He has the word of God, the Lord's day, the preaching of the Gospel, the prayers of the children of God, precious time and precious opportunities. They are given him that he may become a truly penitent believer in Christ; that he may consecrate himself unreservedly to Christ, and faithfully serve him. It is not difficult, then, to believe that the King is robbed of his revenue most extensively in this community. Yes, even of those who know that they must at last come to Christ, to put their whole reliance on him, almost all are making the calculation to defer submitting to his dominion to a period when it can be of no service to him in this world, but when they think they shall want his aid in the next. This is the calculation of the warm-hearted youth, of the graver man, and of the advancing in old age. This is robbing God. The particular

instances of fraud practised every moment and everywhere, would fill volumes of description. These are the germs of all the rest; God is robbed of the heart, of the will, of the time, of the influence; in a word, of everything. And in these cases it is unqualified, unceasing robbery, disguised as it may be.

But there are also instances of it on a more limited scale within the church. There is a general and sincere surrender to Christ. But when it comes to particular instances of subordinating personal will, and feelings, and interests, to the will of Christ, and the interests of his kingdom, there is a drawback, a refusal to meet the employer's draft, and honor it by acceptance. The steward has so many private interests to promote, so many worldly interests of his family to promote, so much worldly business to occupy his time, that he can do very little for Christ, and must make his service and glory very subordinate objects.

If any one acquainted with the rights of property, and the principles of business among honorable men, will carry those principles into the church, and examine the state of the affairs of all these stewards of the most high God, he will find a vast laxness of principle, and still more of practice. The highest attainment of a large number is. to secure a comfortable degree of hope that they shall not fail of heaven in the end. The strong sense of responsibility seems to be wanting. Time, property, speech, influence over other minds, appear to be regarded as instruments of personal gratification, rather than property sacredly entrusted for infinitely higher ends than a momentary gratification, or the exaltation of ourselves and those connected with us. There is reason to fear that few bring themselves to a strict account, reviewing at suitable intervals their course of action, their motives and principles. We fear that few prepare their accounts for the great day of inspection, when the Lord shall return, and require his own with usury. We see some improvement in the use of money. But still there are other clear indications that a large part of the King's property is "buried in napkins," or squandered in self-indulgence. There are heads, hearts, and hands in the church, as well as out of it, that seem not to belong to the Lord, but to the steward.

But we may go no farther in these specifications. There can be no question that the charge lies as justly against us as against the Jews three hundred years before the Christian era. But, if these principles be true, then

INFERENCES.

1. *There is much occasion for this day and its peculiar services.*

Many see no occasion for fasting and humiliation, at any time. Some think it out of season now, in a season of great prosperity. But they misapprehend the design of this exercise, supposing it to

have reference to sufferings, and not to sins; to be designed for times of distress, and not for times of wickedness; for getting rid of trouble, and not for forsaking rebellion. Perhaps the times of great outward prosperity are more suitable even than times of affliction, for such services and exercises as occupy us this day. God is patiently bearing with us, and richly blessing us; but we may be turning our mercies into judgments. We have abundant occasion to repent, all of us, in view of our great dishonesty and dishonorable treatment of God. And we had better fast and humble ourselves, and plead for mercy, before the day of darkness and terror is brought upon us. No nation, at this day, is more favored of God than this. No people are under so great obligations to serve and glorify him. But though we make our nest in Carmel, his hand can find us out, We, favored as we now are, may come under the curse. Nations do come under it, even in this day. No more striking proof of it need be given, than is found in the condition of the Jews for eighteen centuries. They seem to exist in their indestructible distinctness, just to show an example of a nation punished for disobedience to God. But a greater evil than all is the withdrawment of God's Holy Spirit. This may be our curse. And can we bear it? What is the life of our souls? Is it the sunshine of worldly prosperity and human favor? Is it the increase of corn and wine? Is it health and success? Is it the vast progress of science, and the wonderful advance of human society in intelligence and comfort? None of all these. It is the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit. We want it for ourselves, supremely want it. What progress we may make in the divine life, by his gracious aid; how certainly we shall falter and fail, if he in anger leaves us! What a public and social blessing lies yet enfolded in the hand of that blessed Being! He has light for benighted souls; clear vision for the doubting; relief for the tempted; power for the weak; pardon and peace for the penitent; yea, penitence for the impenitent; aid for the praying; salvation for the soul. Our robberies have provoked God to withdraw that Spirit to some extent from us. And he may go still farther. We have then abundant occasion for observing this day; and to make it a day of the deepest humiliation, and penitence, and prayer. For God has said, he will return and bless us. Our work to-day is repentance; a solemn review of our dishonest and dishonorable treatment of God; an earnest purpose of being in all future time more faithful to our trust. Let each one take up this indictment before the bar of his own conscience, and there suffer the King's witnesses to testify, as in his presence. Let each ask himself what has been entrusted to him; what instructions the Lord has given as to the employment of it; and whether he has so employed it; and how all this will appear when the case is tried in open court, at the great assizes of the universe—the great day of oyer and terminer, hearing and settling the matter forever. But, at the same time, it

must not be forgotten, that day has not yet come. The trial is now at the private bar of conscience. Remember the design of that trial. If God can cast you there, then mercy triumphs. It seems to many a formidable process, which is to terminate in their destruction, if the charge of robbing God is sustained. No; it is a prosecution instigated at the suggestion of our Redeemer; to be tried at this tribunal, that we may there be brought to self-condemnation. If he succeed, and can bring us to cast ourselves on the mercy of God, we may be pardoned and saved. What is then your plea in view of the evidence your Judge-Advocate has brought? Is your plea, "Not guilty?" Wherein have we robbed God?" If you persevere in that, there is but one course left for him. He will transfer the cause to the King's Bench. Before that august tribunal you will be put upon your defence for your life. And "who may abide the day of his coming!" Shall it be a contest of force? Man is weak, and God is strong. Shall it be a contest of argument? God is wise, and man is a fool in his wisdom. Shall it be an appeal to right and the public conscience? God is just, and who can contend with him and prosper? Now, a door of hope is open. Then, only that of destruction will be seen by each guilty wretch that has dared to meet the issues of that trial on the merits of the case. Let each one then plead "Guilty." We cannot contest the principle with God. His ownership is a fact incontestable, a right inalienable, a jewel of his crown with which he will not part. The agreement of robbers to think their nefarious course a justifiable, a respectable, and honorable mode of promoting their own interests, does not make it such. None of us can offer an apology for our defaulting, even as plausible as that of these Jews. There is not the semblance of a reason why we should not personally and thoroughly consecrate ourselves to the service of God; why we should not daily be bringing him the tribute of obedience, of praise, of service; why we should not actively and efficiently be engaged in building up the kingdom of Christ in the world. To say that it did not belong to us to do it, is to vindicate the principle of covering a fraud by denying the obligation to do with an employer's property that for which he entrusted us with it. Let us rather plead "guilty." There is then a personal necessity for this day, as well as a public necessity; a need of it for men in the church, and men out of the church. It should be a season of earnest heart-searching inquiry into our condition and prospects as individuals; a time of personal humiliation, confession to God, and sincere repentance.

2. *We see too, if there be such a general ground for this charge, that each one has a personal interest in the moral and religious condition of the community and the nation.*

There are personal considerations, as well as more exalted and disinterested motives, for our considering the public guilt of robbing God as a personal burden to our consciences.

We have participated in the general guilt. Our example as unfaithful stewards, as purloiners of the King's revenue, has had its influence. We are a part of a community of robbers—not robbers of men, but infinitely worse!—of God. By our selfish appropriation of time, property and influence, others have been emboldened. We have encouraged the young to sacrifice the precious fragrance of their youthful affection at the shrines of fashion and of folly. It seems to us a horrid spectacle, to witness a heathen or a Catholic mother carrying her little child to mutter a Latin charm before a wooden statue. But has there been no such desecration among us? Has not our example taught them to give their best time and their best affections to the world, whose "friendship," God has declared to be "enmity with" him! Just so far as we have been carrying out the selfish principle of appropriating God's property to our own uses, we have been encouraging others to do the same. No one can tell what a restraining influence his example would have exerted, had he been faithful to God and to his own sacred trust. Our spirit has silently spread itself like leaven, affecting other minds, where we have not suspected it. We have withheld from the world a mighty restraining influence of prayer; which withholding has contributed to increase the general wickedness. We have been thoughtless, when we should have been mourning over the prevalent dishonesty. And this day the community in which we live, the nation of which we form a part, is just so much the more guilty for our having done wrong, and neglected our duty.

And moreover it meets us personally at another point. We shall share in the judgments which God may send upon the guilty community. The day of national retribution has not ceased with the Jewish polity. It is showing itself in the reeling and staggering of those communities into whose hands God is now putting the cup of his indignation. Our turn may soon come. There are more instruments of punishment reserved for the ungodly. Neither the deluge, nor the fiery storm on Sodom have exhausted them. Babylon and Tyre, Jerusalem and Laodicea, may not stand alone in their terrible history. Men seem to think that, because civilization and art are advanced to such high degrees of perfection and power, we are getting out of God's reach. He used to shoot with a bow and arrow. But we are now arrow-proof, and can laugh, like Leviathan, "at the shaking of a spear." Hear the language of a modern lecturer: "Pain is the unhappy lot of animal vitality. It has borne down the strongest intellect and sapped and withered the affections. The metaphysician finds in it the secret springs of one half of human action; the moralist proclaims it as the impending retribution of terrestrial sin; the strongest figure of the Bible condemns man to eternal flames; and yet this 'dreaded misery, the worst of evils,' now lies prostrate at the feet of science." Would you have conceived of it, that science has deprived God of the power of punishing sin! And what is the wonderful discovery? It is another

Babel. They were wonderful men that discovered masonry, and built a mighty tower, to keep the next deluge God might send, "prostrate at the feet of science," and the scientific builders. Now, it is chloroform. So that, in the language of the lecturer, "physical suffering is not the mundane retribution of transgression." The meaning of which is, we have gone so fast and so far, that those old instruments of God's justice cannot overtake us. I should not here have introduced the remarks of one man, if I had not regarded them as embodying the spirit of the age; as one of the symptoms of that pride which goeth before destruction, that haughtiness which precedes and procures a fall. God can punish in numberless ways—in our bodies, our families, our estates, our minds, our country. Oceans of chloroform cannot extinguish the pains of his dreadful judgments. And they who make such boasts, may have some fearful proofs of this in their own experience.

Zeal for God, and for our country too, urge us to look into this subject, and repent and confess for the church and the nation, as well as for ourselves. We need hardly turn our thoughts to the wrongs of the slave. We need scarcely think of the wandering, weeping, broken-hearted red man. We need not recall scenes enacted on Sunday morning in the closing of the session of our great national legislature. Our police records, the condition of our juvenile population, the robbery of holy time, a thousand signs infallibly indicate that we are provoking God at least to withdraw his blessings. But I think the most alarming of all symptoms is that which has been already mentioned—the diminished dread of God's anger. To save the world from moral ruin, he must break up that atheism. And if material suffering be needed, he will send it.

But why dwell on that? There is a still higher motive to repentance, personal and national. It is suggested in the context: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Can this nation rise to the height of believing that its glory is, to be faithful stewards of God's property? The doctrine of God's exclusive ownership is very unwelcome to selfishness. It would break up all worldliness, if fully believed. But it leaves a perfect and ample sphere for human ownership. It gives dignity and sacredness to that ownership. It takes away the danger and meanness of being rich; the temptation to an excessive desire of wealth. It constitutes the true value of time, talents, wealth, accomplishments, attainments and influence.

Could we contribute to produce this conviction in the public mind; to produce a change in men's estimate of themselves, their time, their possessions, their influence, their responsibility, what a blessed result would certainly follow. Until it does take place, God must have a controversy with men; it cannot be otherwise. Hear it, ye

stewards of the most high God, ye are robbing him, and justifying your fraud. You must change your opinions, feelings and practice. Then the blessing will come. Heaven's windows shall be opened. There is a glorious river of blessing on the other side; but it cannot get through. The curse has closed the flood-gates. Repentance and obedience will open them. That is the design of this day. Let it be the beginning of changes in us, and it will be the beginning of changes in God's dealings with us.

VIII.

CHRISTIAN UNION.

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"Whereas there is among you envying, strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"—1 Cor. iii. 3.

There are many very important principles of truth laid down in this divine testimony, which deserve our most serious consideration. The fundamental principle evidently is, that unity is a mark of true religion;—and that unity in true religion is the work of God, the mark of God's people, and the proper object of pursuit, for those who would honor him and build up his spiritual Church. On the other hand, divisions among the professed supporters of the Gospel are represented as carnal in their origin and influence, and conformed only to the will and habits of men, in the course to which they lead. It is unity in religion, of which the Apostle speaks, other subjects being wholly excluded from the consideration. And it is unity especially, in the religion of the Gospel, other shapes and forms of religion being equally shut out of view. This religious unity among men, is the end, to which the real operation of the Gospel tends. And wherever the Gospel rules alone, unmolested and unperverted by earthly influence, and the corrupting plans of men, the actual result of its operation, is this unity of which the Apostle speaks. Wherever there are seen and found, divisions in opposition to this Christian unity, and envying and strife attending upon these divisions, and arising out of them, they are, and they are to be considered, the evidence of the interference of another power, entirely diverse from that of the Gospel, and operating in direct opposition to it. If among any bodies of professed Christians, or within any such body separately considered, there be divisions, envying and strife, we are therefore authorized to say of them, "they are carnal, and walk as men."

The Saviour's purpose and prayer for his disciples was, that they might be one. One, in the strictest and most entire sense, in which intelligent and independent beings could be united;—"as thou Father in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." That his real disciples are therefore one, and must always be one,

in the sense to which his mind was directed in this prayer, cannot be doubted, without questioning his ability to accomplish the result for which he prayed, and thus unsettling the whole stability and prospect of the Gospel and the Church of God. That his Gospel is really adapted and competent in the ministration of the Holy Spirit, to produce this projected unity, can no more be questioned, without denying the Saviour's ability to frame an instrument, competent and adapted to attain the end which he desired and proposed. But what is the testimony of facts in this case? Has this Gospel ever produced among men, anything which may be considered as the unity here specified? Is there such an unity within our reach, as a visible and practicable object of pursuit? These are questions involving much that is of great practical consequence to us. As such, I would consider them.

I. What is this unity in religion to which our text refers, and the opposites to which it so severely reproves?

It is most evidently, not a mere intellectual unity, an agreement, however perfect, in every view of religious doctrine; that is, an entire uniformity of religious sentiment. Such an unity as this, is not *possible* among unequal minds. Unless every single mind is supposed to have attained an entire, and an equally perfect view of religious truth, it is impossible to imagine an entire uniformity of religious sentiments pervading them. Every step in the progress of spiritual study and acquirement opens, not only new truths to view, but also, which is a fact of equal consequence, new relations of actual truths to each other. There is an intellectual perspective, as well as a physical one; in the opening of which, as the mind proceeds on its journey in science, the whole landscape continually changes; distances, proportions, relations successively come forth to view; past impressions are relinquished, and new ones are received; judgments formed upon partial consideration are renounced, and general convictions including and modifying them in every variety of shape are formed. There are involved in the very progress of the mind in the study of the Gospel, new conceptions of truth, and varying conceptions of the truth every day.

"Light after light, well used, they shall attain."

Even the angels above cannot be said to agree in a perfect intellectual unity. They are ever studying, learning, mutually imparting, and mutually acquiring. They are of necessity therefore, changing their conclusions, and their views of truth, the partial for general, and the superficial for deeper, at every step. If this were not so, learning and study would be idle, and without an object. It cannot be said of any inferior minds, unless we suppose them to be perfectly equal in their powers, and in the progress of their attainments, that they can thus perfectly agree. While anything re-

mains to be learned, new conclusions, perhaps very different conclusions, are still to be formed and to be expressed. An omniscient mind alone can understand all truth. "The unity required in the Church," says Bishop Stillingfleet, "is not an unity of judgment and apprehension among the members of it, which though it be their duty to endeavor after, yet it is no further attainable by man's endeavors, than Adamic perfection is. And *unio Christianorum* in this sense, is one of the jewels belonging to the crown of heaven."

This intellectual equality, without which there can be no intellectual uniformity, would not be *desirable*, even if it were possible. Its necessary result would be a tame and uninteresting identity of minds, constituting the whole race in fact, but a single individual. It would destroy the chief beauty of the intelligent world; breaking up that whole variety of construction and display, which in minds as in matter, forms a yet more glorious harmony, from the very diversity in which its individuals shine. It would close that opened heavenly way which now directs

> "Our knowledge, and the scale of nature sets
> From centre to circumference, whereon
> In contemplation of created things
> By *steps* we may ascend to God."

As it annihilated the beauty, so would it overturn much of the mutual benevolence of intelligent beings. It would constitute an entire independence of minds upon each other; making all to know as much as any; calling into being an indifference to others, and a selfish satisfaction and complacency, for which no uniformity of sentiment, or agreement in opinion could ever be considered an adequate compensation. Vainly, therefore, do men strive for, and insist upon, this perfect similarity of opinion and judgment, as the intended unity of the Christian Church. Had this been the point divinely proposed and appointed, the Bible would have been a simple catena of articles, like the Ancient Creeds; articles to be imposed upon all, and to be received by all; articles without which there could be no salvation; less than which would have been infidelity, more than which additions of man's device. God be praised, his blessed Bible is no iron mask like this. It is full of divine instruction, with which the diligent soul shall be made fat. But its blessings are to descend only upon those who read, and study and meditate; who are not only learning, but also coming to the knowledge of the truth. And the discovered width and depth of the stream of light and knowledge, is regulated by the distance we travel along its heavenly banks, and the zeal with which we attempt to ford it; presenting unceasing encouragement to those who labor to understand, and to stand perfect in all the will of God.

This religious unity is as evidently, not a mere external, apparent unity of profession and name, a oneness of temporary discipline, and outward type. Such an unity as this, an universal form,

without a co-ordinate entire intellectual unity delighting to express itself through this form, would be an intolerable burden. Outward union of form is the creature of mere earthly power and arrangement, and it must perish and pass away with the earth from which it springs. It may be valued as an expression of truth, for the inferior purposes to which it may be made subservient, and which it is able to promote. But it cannot justly be considered as anything beyond an incident, however occasionally of increased importance, in the spiritual and abiding system of Gospel truth. The very condition of man upon earth renders the actual perfection of such an outward union in discipline and appearance, excluding all variety, utterly impossible. The changes in human genera tions and circumstances, as man passes on through successive steps in the history and destiny of his race, must continually tend to break it up. To say that these necessary changes only break up certain less important parts of this discipline, but leave its fundamental substratum of authority and requisition still entire, is an assertion wholly arbitrary, and a weak begging of the whole question. If God has appointed an entire oneness in the circumstances of outward religious discipline, as man's absolute duty under the Gospel, as he did under the Law, it is not for man to speculate upon the comparative importance of its various impositions. The bell and the pomegranate are of as much importance, and clothed with as much authority in such a system, as the Temple and the veil. The Jewish system of religion was necessarily local. And any Judaizing of the Gospel, to cramp it up in an unyielding outward shape of ministration and observance, of equal necessity localizes and limits it. No mere outward imposition, unless it be of the simplest character, can be unvaryingly preached to every creature. Had this external uniformity been the Lord's plan of oneness for his people under the Gospel, he must have laid down exactly, the outward system, to which it might be possible to conform all the generations and nations of men to whom his Gospel was to be proclaimed. And wherever such an arrangment of ordinances had been established and proclaimed by him, the very omission of every point beyond it, becomes the strongest declaration that in this relation, such points were merely incidents and not essentials. This our God and Saviour has done, in setting up a living ministry of men to preach his word, and two outward rites as marks and professions of those who embrace it. Beyond this, men may go in the expediency of circumstances, not in the authority of absolute imposition. The attempt to carry out such an outward system in every possible application, and make a mere uniformity of circumstances and outward condition, the desired oneness of the Church of God, has been Satan's imitation of the spiritual kingdom of the Lord, and the spiritual communion over which he reigns, in that perfection of his craft for man's destruction, the system of Anti-Christian Rome. All such impositions, set forth and received as the required unity

of the church, must be the result of constraint on the one side, and of indifference or weakness on the other; the usurpings of ambitious authority, and the yielding of the spirit of feebleness in submission to it. It is a worthless impounding of the divergent spirits of men, under the mere key of terrifying force, instead of the transformation of them by the inwardly renewing and subduing influence of spiritual and unchanging truth. It is a shell to cover, merely, and not a substance to abide. In such a system Satan accomplishes the destruction of men in two entirely separate ways, by the power of superstition within, and by the power of infidelity without. If you allow external toleration in religious concerns, you have necessarily external variety, the natural result of freedom. If you refuse it, you make the alternative of submission, infidelity—the inevitable product of constraint. Rome refuses toleration, and in doing it, has all the responsibility of propagating infidels. It says to surrounding men who look upon its system, "You shall be this or nothing, for no other system shall be allowed." And men reply, "Then we will be nothing," and they abide by their choice. And whether they are brought in, or excluded, Satan's plan in their destruction is equally secured. External minute uniformity is not the Lord's plan of oneness for his people.

The unity of the Gospel, the unity which it gives to man, and enjoins upon man, and by which the Church of God is known, in opposition to all the divisions of men, is a spiritual unity; which though consistent with much outward diversity, is real, operative and permanent. "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus." It is the fruit of the Holy Spirit in the hearts in which he dwells and rules; the result of which is an everlasting and unchangeable oneness of such souls thus renewed, in their relations to God, and to each other. It is an unity of *motive*, by which every true Christian, every real member of the body of Christ, is led to desire only and above all things the promotion of the divine glory. It is an unity of *desire*, by which each one seeks to attain the one mind, and character, and presence of a beloved Lord. It is an unity of *purpose and plan*, by which every possessor of it is prompted to obey, and honor, and imitate, one Divine Master and Guide of all renewed souls. It is an unity of *spiritual experience*, in which each one has been enlightened and quickened by the same Divine Spirit; made to feel the same burden of guilt; to be conscious of the same personal deficiencies; to seek the same provisions of divine mercy; to accept the same complete salvation in Christ; to find pardon in the same fountain of love; to depend on the same inward spiritual power, divinely bestowed; to ask for the same gifts of grace; to rest upon the same Almighty victorious arm; to hope for the same eternal glory; to confide in the same perfect obedience; and to fasten all their hopes and joys upon the same infinite sufficiency of one Glorious Reigning Lord. It is a unity of *relation*, which has joined together vast multitudes who have no outward knowledge

of each other, in one eternal and indissoluble bond, an unity which in this view expresses itself habitually in prayer, in sympathy, in love, in spiritual aid, and which in this operation, is made the grand instrument of the Holy Ghost in enlarging this heavenly companionship, and of gathering lost and perishing souls into the shelter which is thus displayed. It is an unity of *affection and feeling*, which the Apostle calls the most perfect bond which can subsist among men. "Put on charity, which is the bond of perfection!" far higher, more real, more operative, more lasting, more divine, than all the possible bonds of intellectual agreement, or accordance in outward discipline.

Here is unity,—real, actual oneness. A oneness which brings vast multitudes who had no common relations but the needs, and guilt, and feebleness of a common humanity, into one spiritual connection from which they go no more out. Here is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and in all, one body, one spirit, one hope of one divine calling." How can there be greater unity among independent, intelligent beings? In what do they differ, which is not temporary and comparatively unimportant? In what do they agree, which can ever fade or perish? Surely the boasted unity in discipline of Papal Rome is nothing in comparison of this. *That* is the oneness of bodies which are alike, because all are dead, and motionless, and without self-control. *This* is the union of living agents who are one, because all perfectly agree in the same great and choral harmony of love, and activity, and praise. *That* is the organized working of a machine, in which every automaton figure obeys the will of him who directs the motion of the whole. *This* is the combined energy of responsible beings, who, moved by the same spirit, accord in voluntary united operation, to produce the same great and desired result. *That* is the valley of Ezekiel, when its bones were scattered and were alike, because all were bleached and dry. *This* is the same valley where the army stood forth clothed in the activity, and endowed with the powers of a new life, and the one Spirit of God breathed from every quarter, upon the standing host, and they lived and moved, and acted, and went forth to victory, under his single heavenly guidance. This is unity, entire, actual, operative unity. But it is perfectly consistent with great outward diversity of nation, and language, and form of worship; with much and wide differences of judgment upon many unessential points of mere intellectual perception; with very differing conceptions of truth progressively understood, and as yet, but very partially discerned by any.

This blessed oneness of heart and feeling must govern in the domestic circle. Wretched is the house which has it not. Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is peace and order, as well as liberty. It must rule in the individual congregation of professing Christians, uniting in the same house of prayer, for worship and mutual edification. It must there oppose and correct all the divisions which

jealousy and earthly pride, or selfish interest may tend to produce. Here men are to be all of one mind, to love as brethren, to be pitiful and courteous, to be of the same mind one toward another, according to Christ Jesus. In the whole Church of God it must be the governing principle, extending its influence, and embrace not merely within the limits of one particular outward communion, but to the whole company of God's people,—to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

It is an union, however, with the people of God alone,—with real manifest believers in the Lord Jesus,—with the true servants of the Most High, which seeks them for its objects here, because they are to be its eternal objects hereafter; and which renounces for them, the society and fellowship of the unbelieving, superstitious and profane. Whoever is to dwell with us forever in the Saviour's glory, must be united with us, in our exercise of sympathy and love upon the earth. And though we may differ, and must differ, in judgment and perception, and conclusions here,—yet there need be no divisions, envyings, or strife. Whereto we have already attained, we are to walk by the same rule, we are to mind the same thing. Our union is not to be with the ungodly, or profane; or with this evil world, whose friendship is enmity with God; but with the people of the living God. Union with them for efforts to advance his glory, and to establish his truth, we have no right to withhold or to refuse. We are bound to edify them,—we have no authority to destroy them. To withhold our fellowship and co-operation in the Saviour's work for those whom we really believe to be his servants, in the extent to which we are able to impart it, must always be sin.

This is an unity whose duration will be eternal. The bond by which the renewed people of God are bound together on earth is the bond which unites them all to Christ. It is an imperishable bond. It is the work of a spirit of almighty and undying power. It is the operation of a plan of grace which was formed in an eternity past, and which will abide in an eternity to come. The principles upon which it is formed, and by which it is governed, are the inseparable elements of a purified, intelligent mind. And when all the bonds of earthly circumstances, the outward conformations of ministries and ordinances have passed forever away, the whole company of God's elect, the real church and body of Christ, shall stand up together in an imperishable fellowship, known by one name, animated by one spirit, combined together in one glorious employment for eternity. The chaff of material organizations, whose protection was needful for a season, shall have been swept from the floor; and the wheat of abiding principle, of sympathy, and peace, and love, and truth, shall be gathered into the garner, and remain forever.

II. In opposition to this enjoined and required unity of the

Christian body, the Apostle solemnly declares, that divisions, envyings, and strife are carnal. He does not mean mere differences of opinion, of judgment, even upon important points of doctrine,—differences which were found and tolerated, not only among the apostolic churches, but among the apostles themselves. They received different measures of divine light, and their conclusions and views of duty varied accordingly. And the Holy Spirit has thought fit to record this important fact, and to show how, in the case of Peter, (compare his Epistles with the Epistle to the Galatians,) even in an inspired man, increasing experience brought out a clearer and better understanding of the Gospel in the closing years of life. That the whole Church of Christ should be of one judgment and habit, in external conformity, can never be expected, nor is it in all respects to be desired. The divisions against which the apostle warns, are such as spring from envy and result in strife. They are carnal,—carnal in their *origin*. It is not truth, nor the love of truth, which promotes them, but often extreme hostility to truth, and to the spirit which real truth imparts. They are carnal in their *influence*. Nothing more certainly disturbs and destroys the spiritual mind. They break up all peace and joy within the soul. They destroy all the holiness and power of the Church without. They are carnal in their *effects*. They separate real brethren from each other; and often divide into unnecessary and lasting hostility, those who are partakers of common privileges and blessings. They are the walk and the course of men, merely selfish in their purposes and operations, eager for personal aggrandizement, careless of mutual injury. Sad indeed is it that such a course should ever be introduced into the Church of Christ. But blessed be God, they are carnal in their *duration* also. They belong to the earth, and they will perish with the earth from which they spring. The servants of the Lord will soon outlive them, and pass beyond the field of their operation and influence. The hour will come, when they shall be mere men no longer,—but equal unto the angels, as the children of the resurrection, they shall have the one mind which was in Christ Jesus the Lord.

Let such a system have no dominion among us. Let us strive to walk not as men, but as the servants of the living God. Let us avoid these contentions among Christians and those who originate them. Let us look less at the facts in religion which are temporary and fading, and more at those which are permanent and unchangeable,—less at mere outward characteristics, and more at the real and spiritual marks of the Church of God:—less at the deficiencies of others, and more at the needs and dangers of our own souls. We are in no danger of loving the true servants of God too much, or of uniting too much with those who are really united to Christ. Let it be our purpose and effort to pray for, and to communicate peace and mercy upon all who walk according to this rule, as the Israel of God.

"FOR WHAT IS YOUR LIFE?"

THIS life, in its history and results, is a fearful reality; yet how prone are we all to spend it as if it were a dream of the night! Probationary life is given as a means to an end—an end, too, of infinite moment to us all; and yet most men live this life away as if there were nothing more desirable than it, and nothing to follow it. Rational being, especially in this gospel-world, is invested with amazing interest and responsibility, yet how many sleep or trifle it away as if it were a stupid or idle scene.

How few upon whom now rests the fearful responsibilities of life, and who are hastening to meet its eternal issues, in heaven or hell, have duly pondered those suggestive words—"*What is your life?*" or are walking wisely and peacefully in the light which they shed on the question of duty and of destiny? Few men, we fear, take a sober, rational, prayerful view of this present life—in its brevity—in the uncertainty of its continuance—in its true and proper end—in its relations and duties, obligations and responsibilities—in its connection with death and judgment and retribution—in the certain and eternal fruits and results of it in the future. Right views on this affecting and momentous subject—a subject in which every man has so great an interest at stake—would more powerfully affect the heart and influence the life.

Is this life "a vapor which appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away"—a "shadow flitting o'er the plain"—"as a dream when one awaketh?" Then how can we reckon on its continuance as we do? How waste on trifles its precious moments, each of which may be the last, and one of which not even Queen Elizabeth's kingdom could buy? How defer to an uncertain future the paramount claims of God and the salvation of the soul?

> "Counting on long years of pleasure here,
> Though quite unfurnished for the world to come."

Is the salvation of the soul from sin and its fitness for heaven the real and chief end of life? Is this the main end we are to live for? To this single, yet sublime purpose are all things else to yield? Are all earthly questions and interests to be viewed and acted upon only as they stand related to salvation? Is this present world to be

overcome, and heaven sought in preference? Is self to be crucified, and Christ exalted? Is this body of sin and death to be brought under, and the soul disciplined and trained for glory immortal? Is the present to take its impression, character, direction, not from the past, but from the future—not from man around us? Is this life, one of intimate and responsible relations—imposed by life's great Author, binding us to his law, his gospel, his providence, his creatures in all worlds, and to our fellow-men in particular, and obligating us to seek the glory of the one and the happiness of the other? Then how can we live for finite or selfish ends? How forget God, our Maker, Preserver, Redeemer, Judge, a single moment! How neglect to care for the souls and bodies of those whom he has made our brethren! Oh! are we acting each day—each moment—under the pressure of these immense relations, made responsible throughout their almost infinite circuit for the present and future consequence of each act of life? Then how carefully, how benevolently, how wisely does it become us to live, as the centre of such a sphere of moral and accountable being, and the source of such untold influences!

Is life but the prelude to death—the seed-time of immortality—eternity in embryo—the judgment-day foreshadowed? Then what folly to crowd death out of the mind! What madness to have no regard to our "latter end!" What infatuation to sow broad-cast the seeds of every error and vice, and evil habit, and leave them to grow and come to maturity! What monstrous impiety and wickedness to live regardless of God's authority, and without any reference to the day of reckoning and of doom. If life has such immediate relations to death, judgment, and eternity, then surely, these most tremendous realities should fling their warning light forward upon our pathway. We should live as if we were acting our own death-scene, which in reality we are doing. We should live, as if the flaming eye of our divine Judge were now turned full upon us, scanning all our thoughts and actions. We should live as if the thunders of eternal retribution were already rolling over our heads.

Ah! we are all answering, as fast as time will let us, the great question—"*What is your life?*" We are working out the momentous problem each for himself; and soon shall we see and know the result, and be constrained to abide by it. We are writing down our moral history in characters enduring as eternity,—line after line—chapter after chapter; soon the finale will come—the work will be done—and we shall meet its testimony hereafter.

There is no place like a death-bed to answer for us the inquiry, "*What is your life?*" Then, if not before, will the folly or wisdom of life's choice—life's pursuit—life's moral character in reference to God and sin, salvation, heaven and hell—be clearly manifest. The disclosures of that hour!—what remorse and fear and agony have they caused to multitudes whose lives were passed in

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folly and sin! To have then a good hope, and to feel that life is but the dawn of heaven—the infant state of perfect holiness in glory—the stepping-stone, through grace, to the heights of the redeemed above—will be joyful indeed. Let us lay the foundation of such a hope in a life of piety and holiness.

"We know that we must die; oh, then, how strange
That he whose life is but a passing day,
Should live regardless of his last great change!
All earthly brightness soon must fade away;
All earthly things are hasting to decay;
And man possessed of an immortal soul,
Lives to exalt his perishing mortal clay,
Nor listens to the never-ceasing toll
Of hours he may regret, while ceaseless ages roll."

N. Y. Ev.

IX.

CHRIST, THE FOUNDATION.

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"Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste."—Isaiah xxviii. 16.

One of the most frequent and significant figures employed by the Holy Spirit to designate "the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood," is that of a stately and well-compacted building. Thus the apostle Paul addressing the Ephesian believers, as a portion of this redeemed church, tells them they "are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. In whom (or upon whom) all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord." (Eph. ii. 20, 21.) Of this building, it is the doctrine both of the Old Testament and the New, that the promised Messiah of the one, and the anointed Jesus of the other, is the sole and the secure foundation. We have the unerring authority of inspiration itself, as uttered in the language both of Paul and of Peter, for applying the prediction of our text to the Lord Jesus Christ. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus," says the apostle Paul, "and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For, the Scripture saith, "Whosoever believeth on him, shall not be ashamed." (Rom. x. 9, 11.) Still more full and complete is the attestation of Peter to the Messianic application of this prophecy. "If so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious: to whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious; ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ. Wherefore it is contained in the Scripture, Behold I lay in Zion, a chief corner-stone, elect, precious, and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded." (1 Peter ii. 3–6.) Guided, therefore, by these inspired commentators on the words of our text, we cannot err in the application of this glorious prediction to our adorable Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Let us proceed, therefore, to contemplate—

I. THE FIGURATIVE DESCRIPTION WHICH IS HERE GIVEN OF CHRIST, AS THE FOUNDATION OF THE SPIRITUAL BUILDING, THE CHURCH.

II. THE PROMISE WHICH IS MADE TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE, AND THUS BUILD UPON THIS FOUNDATION.

I. Yes, believer, it is to thy Saviour and thy Redeemer; it is to him on whom all thy confidence reposes, and all thy hopes are built, that this precious description applies—"Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation!" Were it possible that a doubt of this delightful truth might still remain, the words of Paul would at once remove it. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. iii. 11.) Christ, the foundation of his Church! how significant and how expressive the figure! and yet how perfectly simple and level, even to the comprehension of a child! A foundation is the base or groundwork of a building; it is that upon which the whole edifice rests, and which thus supports all the other parts of the building. Take away the foundation of the material edifice in which we are now assembled, and even a child can understand that the whole building must fall; and thus is it that the Church is built upon Christ, and the only reason why it has not, and cannot fall before the attacks of men and of devils is that it is founded upon a rock,—"the rock of ages," and that rock is Christ. Take away from the Christian system, the Lord Jesus Christ, in all the glory of his essential Godhead, and in all the fulness of his vicarious atonement and obedience unto death, and the whole fabric must fall—even as a building, when the foundation is removed from under it—a mass of undistinguishable ruin. The precious blood of Christ which was shed upon Calvary constitutes that "fountain for sin and uncleanness," in which every member of his true spiritual church is cleansed from the guilt of sin. There is not a saint in glory, who has not "washed his robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," and there never can be. The meritorious obedience and sufferings of Jesus Christ, are the grounds of all acceptance with God, the Father, the foundation upon which every individual believer builds all his hopes; and as the spiritual church of Christ is made up of believers and only believers in every nation and in every age, it follows that the foundation upon which that church rests collectively, is the Lord Jesus Christ, even "he who liveth and was dead, and is alive for evermore."

The church which Christ purchased with his own blood consists of true believers of every land, of every age, and of every name. This spiritual church, thus founded upon himself, is bounded by the narrow limits of no visible organization. God forbid, therefore, that we should imitate those who proudly arrogate to themselves, as a visible hierarchy or organized community, the claim of being exclusively *the church* of Christ! The New Testament knows nothing

of any such organization as exclusively the Church. It cannot be doubted that from the time of the apostles till now, there have ever existed *true churches* of Christ; yet neither any one of these visible churches, however pure its doctrine,—nor any collection of these true churches, much less of false ones, had any right to arrogate to themselves, as an ecclesiastical organization, the character of *the alone church of Christ.* We read nowhere in the New Testament of "the church," in the sense of the visible churches, of a nation, or of the world, united under patriarch, primate or pope. True, we read of "the church of God," but it is that "which he hath purchased with his own blood," including all the elect of God, who are now in heaven, or who ever will be there, the purchase of a Saviour's blood, with whatever visible church they may have been associated upon earth, or even if connected with none. This church is Christ's mystical body, of which he is the "head," (Col. i. 18, 24,) and, therefore, includes all such, and only such as are his living and spiritual members. This is "the church of the first-born, which are written in heaven," (Heb. xii. 23,) and includes all those and only those, who are written in the Lamb's book of life. (Rev. xxi. 27.) Of this church it is said, "Christ is the head of the church, and he is the Saviour of the body," and "Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word. That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. v. 23–27.) But all this can be said of no ecclesiastical organization on earth. Where is the visible church of which it can be affirmed with certainty, that all its members are living and spiritual members of Christ? and that in its records not a single name is enrolled that is not "written in the Lamb's book of life?" This "glorious church" is not the Romish, nor the Greek, nor the Anglican church. It is neither Episcopal, nor Presbyterian, neither Methodist, nor Baptist; although it probably includes members of them all. It is no mere national church, bounded by state or geographical limits, but it consists of "a great multitude whom no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues." (Rev. vii. 9.) Nay, more than this, though all its members will, at last, together stand "before the throne and before the Lamb," yet this church is at present confined neither to earth nor to heaven. "Part of the host have crossed the flood, and part are crossing now." Thus separated but not divided, the members of this church are both on earth and in heaven.

> "The saints on earth and all the dead
> But *one communion* make;
> All join in Christ, their living head,
> And of his grace partake."

In this sense, but in this only do the Scriptures recognize, and do

we believe, in a universal or catholic church. And whether we speak of the spiritual church in this general signification, or of the visible churches of Christ upon earth, either individually or collectively, it is true that as the foundation of the church, "God hath laid in Zion a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone," and that "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

But it is time that we proceed to consider the epithets that are figuratively applied to Christ in our text, as the foundation which God hath laid in Zion.

"Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, *a stone*," or a rock. The general idea included in this figure is undoubtedly that of stability, firmness, or strength. If Christ is indeed that rock upon which the church is built, then is it established upon a foundation strong, immovable, secure—and then may we with confidence believe, that even "the gates of hell shall never prevail against it."

There are some, however, who maintain that, not the Lord Jesus Christ, but the fallible mortal Peter is that "rock" upon which the church of Christ is built; and this belief they profess to derive from the conversation between our blessed Lord and Peter, recorded by Matthew, (chap. xvi. 15, etc.) Jesus said to his disciples, "Whom say ye that I am? and Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The interpretations which Roman Catholic writers put upon this passage, viz., that Peter is the rock or foundation upon which the church is built, evidently conflicts with the declaration of the apostle Paul, already quoted, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid—which is Jesus Christ;" this interpretation also is comparatively modern in its origin, and is adopted in flagrant violation of the creed of the Romish church itself. In that creed, called the creed of pope Pius IV., they solemnly profess to receive no interpretations of Scripture, "except according to the unanimous consent of the fathers," (nisi juxta unanimem consensum patrum.) Among the most eminent of the "fathers" here referred to, I will quote from only two, in order to prove my assertion, that, in their interpretations of Christ's words to Peter, they violate their own acknowledged principles. In a sermon of Augustine, the celebrated bishop of Hippo, that most eminent of all the fathers comments upon the words as follows: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock which thou hast confessed—that is, *upon myself*, the Son of the living God, I will build my church." The opinion of Hilary, another of the most celebrated fathers, differs slightly from that of Augustine, and most entirely from that of the modern Romanists. "This one founda-

tion," says Hilary, "is immovable, that is, that one blessed *rock of faith*, confessed by the mouth of Peter, 'thou art the Son of the living God,'" and again "the building of the church is upon this *rock of confession.*"

I do not quote from these early fathers, because I imagine that their authority upon this or any other subject should settle the question—their opinions are to be judged, in precisely the same way as those of other fallible men,—but merely to show that, in this instance at least, Romanists have violated their own rule, to receive no interpretations except according to the *unanimous consent* of the fathers."—It is evident, moreover, whatever may be the degree of weight attached to these writers, that if the promise referred to Peter, it failed of accomplishment; for when Peter, with oaths and curses, denied his Lord, certainly the gates of hell did prevail against him; and if the church had rested upon him, when he fell, the church would have fallen with him. Still more evidently is this true of the long line of corrupt and vicious men, so different in life and spirit from the apostle Peter, who for ten or twelve centuries at least, have claimed to be successors of the apostle, and vicegerents of God upon earth. No, no, brethren! Christ—and not a fallible, erring mortal—is the rock, the tried, the sure foundation; and "their rock is not as our rock, our enemies themselves being judges."

This foundation is, moreover, designated a tried stone. "Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a *tried stone.*" Let us examine the application of this epithet to our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Yes, my brethren, Christ is a tried stone! For in the first place, I remark, he was tried, *when enduring the attacks of the serpent* in his conflict on behalf of his people on earth. No sooner had Satan succeeded in introducing sin, and consequent misery into our world, than the bow of promise appeared in the cloud, and God declared to the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it (that is, the promised seed), shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." For four thousand years had Satan been in awful expectancy of this formidable adversary, and been preparing himself for the conflict. At length the promised conqueror appears in our world; and it is a fine conception of our great English poet, Milton, that on the day of Christ's public baptism, when he was solemnly anointed to his work, Satan "with envy fraught and rage" hovered near the sacred scene, listened to the attestation from Heaven, "this is my beloved Son," then flew to the regions of darkness, to bear the alarming news to his compeers and associates in rebellion.

> "And them amidst,
> With looks aghast and sad, he thus bespake;—
> Alas! too soon for us, the circling hours
> This dreaded time have compassed, wherein we
> Must bide the stroke of that long threatened wound

To be inflicted by the seed of Eve
Upon my head. * * * * * *
For this ill news I bring; the woman's seed,
Destined to this, is late of woman born."

And now the arch adversary nerves himself for the conflict, in which he knows he must engage. He had already sought, in vain, to destroy the wondrous babe at Bethlehem by inciting his willing servant Herod, to a deed of terrible cruelty and blood. Again he attempts to overcome this wondrous being, by the temptation in the wilderness, but Jesus comes forth victorious from the trial, and the enemy is again defeated. Ah, how vain the attempts of Satan to put out this glorious light which had come into the world, and to parry the dreadful blow which he knew must ere long fall upon his own head! Yet, although he may not destroy, he still may bruise, for so it had been promised, even to him, "and thou shalt bruise his heel." He cannot touch the head, the kingdom of Christ, though his own head must be crushed, his own kingdom be destroyed;—yet he may bruise the heel, the inferior part, the human nature of Christ, and he prepares to do his worst. Let us then, in imagination, follow our blessed Lord and Saviour to his cross of agony, and there contemplate the desperate conflict between the serpent and the seed. Christ had already contended with the cruel adversary in the garden of Gethsemane, in bitter agony (αγων, a contention, contest for victory) and bloody strife—but he had stood the trial, and had come off victorious. At length the enemy beholds the suffering Son of God, hanging in unutterable anguish upon the torturing cross. Hark, that cry! "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Satan hears it, and perhaps for a moment, imagines that he has won the victory. "Ah, God, the Father, hath forsaken him," thinks the great adversary. But is it so then? Hath Jesus been tried in this furnace, and hath he failed to stand the trial? No, no! for, hark, another cry! and now all nature attests that it is the shout of victory. "It is finished!" the glorious triumph is achieved, the glorious work is done. At this cry, the whole fabric of nature trembles to its centre. The vail of the temple is rent in twain. The solid rocks are shattered and rent. The earth is shaken to its deep foundation; and not earth only, but also Hell. Satan heard it, and trembled, and tottered beneath the blow, and all the domains of darkness resounded with that shout of victory, while all the fallen inhabitants of that dark abyss, heard it as the sentence which pronounced their doom. Yes, my brethren then was the promise fulfilled, "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." Then was the kingdom of darkness shaken from centre to circumference. Then, the domains of death were invaded, and "the graves were opened, and many bodies of saints which slept arose." Then, the dart of death was blunted and deprived forever of its sting. Blunted! *did* I say? Nay, more than that. In the words of John Ryland,

"Then the dart of death went through the suffering Saviour, and stuck in his cross, and the king of terrors has never been able to draw it thence, to bring it to the death-bed of a believer, ever since." Yes, my brethren, truly our Jesus is a tried stone! Tried in this bitter conflict, and he stood the trial; he came off triumphantly victorious. And O, what a victory! and what a moment that, in which this victory was achieved! The wily adversary—like some serpent trailing his slimy way through the tangled grass—had tracked the path of the Son of God, through all his scenes of sorrow and of suffering, up to the moment when on the cross he uttered his mournful, bitter cry. At that instant, the serpent with his most venomous grip seized upon the heel of the seed of the woman. Then Jesus appeared forsaken both of God and man. Satan is just ready to utter the shout of triumph. But, at that moment, Jesus lifts up that wounded heel, stamps upon and crushes the head of the serpent, and cries, It is finished! the glorious victory's won! Yes, my brethren, Jesus is a tried stone!

2. But in another sense, Jesus is a tried stone—tried, because amid all the attacks of persecution and infidelity, his church, founded upon himself, has not only withstood the shock, but has flourished and increased amid the fury of the storm. Founded upon a rock, the gates of hell have not prevailed against it.

Near the south-western extremity of the island of Great Britain, the traveller may observe a tall and massive column of solid masonry, founded upon an isolated rock at the distance of miles from the shore, rearing its lofty beacon light to warn the mariner of the dangers that lurk beneath, and of the rocky caves where the hardy crew of many a noble vessel have found their ocean graves. That structure is the world-renowned Eddystone light-house. When the architect of that noble column proposed, near a hundred years ago, to erect on that storm-lashed rock a light-house of solid masonry, which might defy the fury of the most terrible tempest, there were those who laughed to scorn the enterprise, and treated it as the dream of a visionary and enthusiast, while the prediction of nearly all was, that such a structure could never stand before the dreadful storms which had dashed many a noble vessel upon the Eddystone rocks. Yet undeterred by the scoffs of enemies, or by the fears of friends, the builder proceeded in his work, and as layer after layer of masonry was added, the predictions of many were loud and frequent, that the first violent storm would sweep it all into the deep. Storm after storm beat upon the yet unfinished structure, driving the workmen from their labor; but as each storm subsided, the work was still uninjured. At length, in about three years, the last top-stone was laid upon the noble column, and in one week afterwards, the saving beacon-light was streaming over the waves from its lofty summit. Still, many predicted its downfall.—'Wait,' said they, 'till a storm rises, such as occurs only three or four *times* in a century—like the great tempest of

1703—and see whether our fears will not be verified.' Three years after the completion of the work, about the beginning of the year 1762, just such another terrible and furious storm arose, and the people on shore trembled for the fate of the keepers of the light-house, and expected that the morning light would show that the whole structure had been scattered to the waves. When the fury of the storm was past, many anxious eyes were directed through telescopes towards the Eddystone rocks, and the expectation was general that no vestiges of the light-house would be seen. How great, then, was the gratitude of its friends, and the astonishment of all, when through the still dark and murky air, the noble column was seen next morning, still rearing its summit to the clouds, perfectly uninjured, and with not a stone displaced! Then, at length, all were forced to confess, that the building was secure. It was a *tried* light-house, and the rock upon which it was founded was proved to be a "*tried* stone, a sure foundation." Since that time, this monument of Smeaton's genius and perseverance has stood for near a century, and storm after storm has spent its rage upon it, but still it remains uninjured, holding forth amid the darkness its friendly light to warn the mariner of his dangers, and to direct him in safety to his port. It is founded upon a rock, and the storms and the dangers of a century have proved that rock to be "a tried stone, a sure foundation."

And thus, my brethren, has storm after storm of persecution and hate fallen upon the saints of the Lord Jesus, the church which he purchased with his blood—persecution from Pagan, from Papist, and from Infidel, through her long career of eighteen centuries, yet that church still stands secure and unshaken—with energies unbroken, and numbers largely swelling from century to century—because it is founded upon a rock, and that rock is Christ.

"On the Rock of ages founded,
What can shake thy sure repose?
With Salvation's walls surrounded,
Thou may'st smile at all thy foes."

If the foundation upon which the church is built had been less than solid rock, the fierce storms of persecution and hatred, which from age to age have been beating upon it, would long since have laid it prostrate in ruins; but instead of that, they have but demonstrated its strength and added to its dimensions. So true is this, that it has grown into a proverb, "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." And from that blood—whether poured out in the amphitheatres of pagan Rome, the inquisitorial dungeons of papal Rome, or at the auto-da-fés of Seville, of Smithfield, or of Oxford—have sprung up harvests, multiplying a hundred-fold converts to the church on earth, to fill up the places of those, sent by the fires and flames of martyrdom to swell the ranks of the church in Heaven.

Yes, my brethren! in the security and growth of the church, in

spite of winds that have blown, and storms that have beat upon it, do we see abundant proof that it is founded upon a rock, and that that rock is "a tried stone, a sure foundation!"

3. In still another sense is it true, that Christ is a tried stone; for thousands and millions who are now in heaven, have tested the stability of that sure foundation, by building all their hopes thereon, and not one of them all has ever been disappointed. O, if we could draw aside the veil that separates us from the multitudes of the redeemed in glory, and inquire of them—what was the foundation upon which they built, the rock on which they trusted, "while travelling in the vale of tears below"—they would reply with one voice—"None but Jesus! none but Jesus! He, alone, was the foundation laid in Zion; on that foundation all our hopes were based, and we found him to be "a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation." "Do you behold us," exclaim these glorified ones, "arrayed in white robes? Those robes were washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. Do you behold us bearing the palms of triumph, and singing the songs of victory? We overcame through the blood of the Lamb." And then they strike their lofty notes—"Worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain! Blessing, honor, glory and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever!"

Such, my brethren, would be the testimony of all the hosts of the redeemed. Not a saint in glory that did not build upon Christ as the rock of his hopes, and every one found him to be "a tried stone, a sure foundation." They found him thus in the hour of temptation and trial, in the hour of sorrow and adversity, and in the hour of danger and of death. Paul was standing—firmly standing—on this foundation, when, with death staring him in the face, he said, "I know in whom I have believed;" and thousands of dying saints on the brink of Jordan have reposed on him with equal confidence. The question was once asked of a dying man of God, the late venerable Dr. Gano—"Do you still hold to the doctrines you have preached, the doctrines of the Deity and the atonement of Christ?" and what was his reply?—"O," said he—"do you ask me, if I still hold to these doctrines? it is these precious truths hold me now, and if they did not, I should sink!" Yes, my brethren, Jesus is indeed a tried stone. This departing saint of God, and thousands, millions more, built all their hopes on him, and they found him, when they most needed a solid rock to rest upon, to be "a tried stone, a sure foundation." And let me ask, beloved, have not we, too, tested the stability of this rock of all our hopes? Yes. blessed be God! we also have built upon Christ as the foundation; and amid trials, adversity, and sorrow, we have ever found him to be "a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation." Well, therefore, can we sympathize with the conclusion which the Apostle Peter draws, when quoting

this glorious description of Christ the foundation—"Unto you, therefore, which believe, he is PRECIOUS."

We have already dwelt more at length upon this significant and beautiful description of Christ the foundation, than we intended when commencing this discourse. It is time, therefore, that we now proceed briefly to consider

II. THE PROMISE WHICH IS MADE TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE, AND THUS BUILD UPON THIS FOUNDATION.

To the man who builds upon Christ as the sure foundation, or in other words, who exercises faith in the promised Messiah as the ground of all his hopes, who relies for salvation on his atoning blood and perfect righteousness, it is promised in our text—"he that believeth shall not make haste." The apostles Paul and Peter, in citing this passage, quote from the Septuagint, and accordingly they render it "he that believeth shall not be ashamed," (Rom. ix. 33,) or "confounded," (1 Pet. ii. 6.) The Hebrew word properly signifies "to make haste," and hence, according to one lexicographer, "to hurry hither and thither as persons in confusion." The apparent discrepancy between the text as given by Isaiah, in the Old Testament, and as quoted by the apostles in the New, vanishes at once when we consider the nature of the figure that is here employed. The exact idea of the word in this place seems to be that of a man on whose house the tempest is beating, and who, fearing the foundation is insecure, *makes haste* to escape therefrom to a place of safety. To illustrate the force of the promise, conceive the situation of a man as described by our blessed Lord in his sermon on the mount, who had "built his house upon the sand." The rains descend, the floods beat upon that house, the foundations begin to give way, the house totters to its fall, and the frightened inmate, terrified and bewildered, "makes haste" to escape from the crumbling ruins, and to fly to a place of safety. Another has built his house upon the rock. Upon this also the rains descend and the floods beat, but its firm foundations remain unmoved, because it is founded upon a rock, and its happy inmate, so far from being obliged to "make haste" to escape—in conscious security, may smile at the fury of the storm. "He that believeth shall not make haste"—"shall not be confounded"—shall not be "ashamed" of his hope. The man who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ builds on him as the rock of his salvation, the tried and sure foundation; and when the gathering storms of divine wrath shall burst over a guilty world, then the promise of our text declares, that such an one shall not make haste, shall not be ashamed or confounded.

O it was a terrible day when the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened, and the floods of divine wrath were poured forth upon an apostate world. Thousands of terror-stricken sinners, who had, perhaps, often

mocked and ridiculed Noah while building the ark; then, as they watched the gathering waters, *made haste* to escape to some rising ground, and as the flood gathered around them even there, cast their anxious gaze to a still more lofty crag, and perished, perhaps, while they were making haste to escape thereto. On the other hand, Noah had believed God, and being "moved with fear," had "prepared an ark for the saving of his house." He believed, and while a guilty and unbelieving world was drowning, there was no need that he should make haste to escape from the waters of the flood. Safe in the ark, for "the Lord had shut him in," he could smile at the fury of the storm. He believed in God, and he was not ashamed.

So also, was it a fearful day when showers of burning sulphur descended upon guilty Sodom and Gomorrah, filling all hearts with terror and dismay, and involving men, women, and children in one general and awful destruction. Contemplate, for a moment, that terrible scene! Who are those young men, pressing their hands over their mouths to shut out the burning, suffocating atmosphere, casting their inflamed eyes to yonder neighboring mountain, and *making haste*, if it were now possible, to escape to a place of safety? They are the sons-in-law of Lot. Alas! it is now too late. They had heard the solemn warning from their father-in-law, but Lot had "seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law," (Gen. xix. 14.) Lot and his daughters were now in safety, for they had heeded the angels' warning—"Escape to the mountain!" They had believed God, and were not ashamed. As for these wicked young men, they had treated with contempt the admonition of Lot. They had refused to believe, and were now ashamed and confounded. They made haste, if it were possible, to escape from the suffocating flames, but they made haste in vain. The sentence had gone forth—"Behold! ye despisers, and wonder and perish!" and repentance came, now, too late. And thus, my hearers, shall it be in the day of judgment. Then those who trusted in falsehood shall find to their dismay, that "the hail shall sweep away their refuges of lies." They have built upon the sand, and they shall feel their foundation give way, and in that day shall their hopes perish. See! that terror-smitten company as they come forth from their graves, roused by that voice which shall awake the dead. Alas! alas! they feel that the hour of their judgment is come, and conscious guilt tells them that "righteous Judge" is now their enemy. Hark! that cry of agony—"Rocks fall on us! mountains, cover us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb!" but rocks and mountains are deaf to their cry. See! how they make haste to hide themselves, if it were possible, from the lightning of his eye. But they make haste in vain. They would not believe, and now the day of mercy is past; their dismay and confusion is complete!

But O, how different the portion of the righteous! Rising from

the grave, they feel that the hour of their complete redemption has at length arrived. The promise is at length fulfilled—"I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy death! O grave, I will be thy destruction!" (Hosea xiii. 14, *Welsh translation.*) As they burst the fetters of the grave, they look upward, and behold the coming, the expected Saviour, and break forth in the joyful acclamation, "Lo! this is our God, we have waited for him, we will rejoice and be glad in him!" They believed on Jesus Christ, and now they are not ashamed. They built upon the rock of ages, and now, indeed, as ever before, they find him to be a tried stone, a sure foundation. Standing before the tribunal of the Judge, the believer in Jesus feels that in that Judge he has a Saviour, an Advocate, a Friend; and in reply to the demands of a violated law, he can point to Christ as his Redeemer from the curse, and as the Lord his Righteousness. In the beautiful words of Cowper, describing the scenes of the Judgment—

"All joy to the believer! he can speak,
Trembling, but joyful,—confident yet meek;
Since the dear hour that led me to thy foot,
And cut up all my follies by the root,
I never trusted in an arm but thine,
Nor hoped, but in thy righteousness divine.
While struggling in the vale of tears below,
That never failed, nor shall it fail me now."

O glorious and blessed promise! "he that believeth shall not make haste"—"shall not be ashamed or confounded world without end." May this promise, beloved brethren, be yours and mine! may we build all our hopes on Christ as the rock of ages, and thus find him to be a tried stone, a sure foundation! And then, in temptation and sorrow, in sickness and at death, at the judgment and in eternity, will he be our never-failing friend, and our portion forever!

X.

OUR OWN SALVATION—THE WORK AND THE ENCOURAGEMENT.

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"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."—PHIL. ii. 12, 13.

A MAN who has undertaken to be saved, has entered upon the greatest possible work—a work which, as it looks for its consummation at the end of life, so is to engage all the energies of his lifetime. There never was a more grievous deception of Satan, than that which satisfies the convert with his initial experiences, and settles him down upon them as the substance of salvation. All the crude ideas of *getting religion* by a few given exercises, and a certain short process of excitements and reliefs, so that soon it shall be all done and over, have come of that arch-deceiver, who ruins as completely by false hopes, as by infidelity. This urgency of the Apostle is therefore of most momentous import. The Christian course is called a race. And he exhorts the man who has entered the lists, to run on. The crown is not at this end, nor anywhere along the course; but at the other end—at the goal. Here is a WORK, only undertaken now, and only begun. All the undertaking and the beginning infer a vigorous and continuous prosecution. It is a thing to be elaborated, carried out, completed. And because it is a man's own salvation, it is very plain that it must be a work demanding high personal endeavors, which are never to be remitted unto the end.

Our own salvation, therefore, he sets before us, as a plan to be executed—as a design to be fulfilled—as an edifice to be carried up to the top-stone. And as this salvation is not really accomplished, on our part, until life ceases, so the working out of this majestic plan is the grand business of one's lifetime; and the laborious workman puts the last stroke of the hammer to the building, with his last and dying breath.

But here it is to be understood, that this prosecution of the work also supposes the work really commenced. The language is susceptible of misapplication. The address is here, in the text, not to

the unconverted, but to those who have really undertaken—in whom, and by whom, a beginning has been made. It is not intended to set any man upon his own resources, until he is first fully cast upon the resources of God in Christ. None but such would understand the mental philosophy of the text. It is not meant to deceive any with the idea that they can undertake and work out their own salvation, all independently of the Almighty, and with no thanks to divine grace. We enter into no discussion here about the divine efficiency as consistent with the free agency. We take the *fact*, as it must be admitted, and as it is expressed in the text, that in this saving matter, man works *out*, and God works *in*. We are not compelled to describe the processes, any more than to explain the co-operation of soul and body in every action. We know from the fact itself, that such co-working is consistent. Every Christian finds it so in his experience, whatever his theory may be; and the man is only urged to his own proper part in the matter. We need not show how, in the highest sense, Christ has wrought out the salvation of every true believer, by his redeeming work; or how the plan employs the man's own energies, only renewing his will. The whole truth of the subject is implied in the text, and the positions are perfectly consistent.

First, then, *it is here put among the leading encouragements to a Christian, that it is God who already worketh in him.* That a good and gracious work is already begun in the believing heart by the Author of our salvation. "If there be any consolation in Christ," he says, go forward. If you have any comfort in his love, get more. If you have any fellowship of the spirit, any bowels and mercies, aim at an increase, and fulfilment. The way is most clearly opened to you. For this experience, however incipient, is to be recognized as a proof of that divine working, which gives the highest encouragements for the prosecution. You are to take these beginnings of a new life, and instead of being disheartened at the mere infancy of it, consider its high and heavenly origin, and be animated in the prospect of its development. If there be in you any genuine feature of the new birth, does it not argue that you are laid hold of by infinite grace, for your salvation? And you are "to follow after, if that you may apprehend that for which also you are apprehended of Christ Jesus." Seize these cheering proofs that "God hath not appointed you to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." They are the encouraging hints to you of an eternal purpose, working already in you this incipient willing and doing. Every changed disposition, and every regenerate action, are God's gracious intimations to you, urging you on in the way of your complete and eternal redemption. You are not left to grope in the dark, awed and disheartened by impenetrable mysteries; for just so far as God's secret plan may be useful to be known in the attainment of salvation, so far it is opened to the true believer. The work is a present salvation from sin, as connected

with a future salvation from death. The name *Jesus* has this interpretation to every believer, "He shall save his people from their sins." The work is personal, therefore. It is present and practical. It is such, that if it is going on, you can see its progress in the progressive results. It is such as to engage your interest and energy at every step. To be saved from the sins which have debased you, and from the sins which still beset you, is to be your daily aim and ambition, as the essence of the great work; and never are you to be content a moment, except as you see this salvation going vigorously forward to the end. And so Christ does early whisper to the true disciple, "I have chosen you and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit." "Fear not, little flock," he is yet saying to his believing people; "it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." And by unmistakable marks and tokens, he is already showing the timid heir of heaven all the promises, and seals, and covenants, and often, as it seems, his very name written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Are not these the strongest incentives held out, from that world of glory, to labor on—to climb up the hill—to *work out* the salvation? This is the crown laid up for the Apostle, of which he knows beforehand. This is the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, which he declares himself to have been striving for as his one aim of life, and with all his energies.

We have now prepared the way to consider this practical subject from the proper point, and with its legitimate application—to show *how one's salvation is to be worked out*—and *to urge these high incentives.*

1. This charge of the Apostle *is aimed against the natural perils of the case.* It would be readily enough comprehended, in reference to any other undertaking. We all know what it is to work out a calculation to its results—what it is to work out a difficult plan to its execution—what it is to work out a personal deliverance by energetic labors—what it is to work out any enterprise to which zeal and vigor of mind and body can be applied. It is to employ our highest endeavors to compass the results, whether they be near or distant, whether they occupy us an hour or a lifetime. One of the English masters, when asked how long he had been at a certain picture, answered, "*All my life.*" Has a man undertaken to be saved? Then this is only the greatest possible undertaking. Has he looked into the revealed plan, and consulted the divine party, and so entered upon the work? Then, here is simply an exhortation to that man to *work on*, under the most gracious auspices, with the strongest assurances of success, yet with fear and trembling at the parties concerned, and at the magnitude of interests involved. It is an exhortation pressed home, in view of a natural tendency to run a brief season, and *tire*, or *turn aside*—to work, and *weary* of it—to fall under the power of Satan, in temptations that seem the more severe and artful, because of the effort to elude his snare.

How, in four cases out of five, the sower finds his instrumental work a wretched abortion! The way-side ones—the stony ground ones—the thorny field ones—and then, at last, even the wheat, with the tares sown at night among it! Some seed snatched away at the very outset; some springing promptly, but, alas! no soil and no root; some growing up, but, oh! the thorns growing up faster, and by such a rank and ruinous overgrowth, choking all that was hopeful at first; and then, after a thousand other escapes, the remainder liable to be overrun with tares, maliciously sown by the adversary. How the Apostle seems to chill at the thought, when he hears God saying, "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him!" How he adds, "We are not of them that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." How he gathers a volume of warnings into one brief sentence, and exclaims, in the ear of every heavenward traveller, "Remember Lot's wife!" How he paints the faithless, heartless adventurer, as the profitless ploughman, who, with hand to the plough, is looking back! How he cries out to those of slacking pace, "Ye *did* run well; who did hinder you?" It is, plainly enough, in the life-long elaboration of this great work, that there is the danger of being misled by error, or of giving up for discouragement, or of going back for an unquenched love of the world. One can see that his peril would be where he is to settle down upon fixed and final principles, and to go on after the novelty is off, and the excitement of a first change is abated, and he is to act upon the naked truth of the matter, against the trinity of foes—the world, the flesh, and the devil. Therefore the exhortation, "As ye have always obeyed, work out your own salvation with FEAR and TREMBLING."

2. We remark further, that *it plainly falls to each to do a peculiar work in his own personal salvation.* Each convert to Christ has his own character to be corrected, his own habits to be mastered, his own exposures to be guarded, his own personal weaknesses to be provided for, and his own peculiar tastes, that the cultivation of years had strengthened, to be battled with, now, and overcome. It is on this very account, that no two have had the self-same experiences in their first conversion. Each has come to Christ, but from his own particular starting-point, and with a history his own, and a mind his own, and therefore with mental exercises quite his own also. And so, in the pursuit, one has the strongest temptation from a quarter where another would find almost none. One brings with him a disposition that has more marked blemishes than another. One has been living under the power of worldly habits, that have injured the very texture of the mind, and perverted the common trains of thought and feeling. One is a perfect novice in the Scripture. Another has known it from his youth up, until its passages have no force, almost, for the formality. Do you tell me that these have no peculiar work to do in their own personal salvation? It belongs to their very personality and identity, that they

should now be called to wrestle, each for his own deliverance, and *that* according to the powers of evil under which they have more especially fallen. One has even to deny himself certain practices, not in themselves sinful, perhaps, but most mischievous to his own mind and tendency.

We see, then, first, that all the work of *self-inspection* comes in here, to be daily prosecuted. This prevailing sense of religion as an *individual* matter, involving the renewal of one's own soul, the conquest of his own passions, the mastery of his own particular foes, and the attainment of his own salvation, is an essential element of piety. The idea that it is *progressive*, not in its vital principle, but in its results—that it is a work going on, an edifice carrying up in the way of Christian edification—this enters into all living discipleship. And as you want to know the state of your flocks and herds, so—only more intensely—you want to know the state of your religious attainments. Examination, and calculation, and vigorous action, accordingly must enter into the work. What is to be done in his salvation, involves the plain matter-of-fact as to what each has, in his own heart and life, to be subdued, corrected, and delivered from. And to know this well, is only a first step; and to keep a close eye upon the progress day by day, is only a natural and necessary step in working out the salvation. It seems to belong only to a common honesty of purpose, that if there be a work going forward, and a personal work, it should be watched, and wrought out according to the aspects of it, and the prospects of success. It is because this is mainly a heart-work, that one is to keep turning within, in nice and critical inspections of feeling, and balancings of self, and weighings of motive and aim. You can see, that they who give up this self-criticism—this minute, private, faithful self-examination—give up the first principles. How can they *work out* what they are willingly ignorant of, and what they constantly neglect in the progressive and successive steps?

So also, secondly, a *self-discipline* is required in this work. They who know themselves, or who are in any habit of self-inspection, will find that their own salvation, to be wrought out at all, demands a vigorous and rigid self-discipline. To be schooling in divine truth—battling the enemy—shaping the plans, and tempers, and motives, by God's Word—treasuring up the *defences* of the Gospel, and putting on the whole armor of God—this is the daily business. To be sitting at the feet of Jesus—shunning temptations—casting aside every weight, and bringing every thought into captivity to Christ's obedience—this is the daily work. And this makes the necessity for "*praying always*," even with the armor on. What can they do who give a loose to their own hearts, yielding to whatever excitements and impulses may any time surround them? No close calculation of duty, or even of expediency, no setting of limits and guards upon their natural tastes, no pleading at the mercy-seat for checks upon their own tempers, and no earnest

effort to overcome their former selves, and to be renewed in the spirit of their minds, how can they be in any training for the skies? Such have evidently no stated work in hand, touching this matter of their salvation. There is nothing which they are prosecuting with steady, steadfast aim, day by day. They are not, like the Apostle, exercising themselves to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man—not struggling to keep the body under. This is not the necessity of a periodical fast, as though it were the season of the year that is to remind the Christian of his fastings. Ah! primitive Christians fasted for occasions in their lives, rather than for seasons in the calendar. When they were brought under strong temptation or affliction—when they were in some special danger of being overcome—when they were going out to some eminent duty—or when they felt the unusual risings of sin within them—then, for their self-discipline, they fasted. It might have been once in a week, or twice; but not twice because it was the Pharisee's custom, but if the soul's necessities seemed to demand it. Who can live the Christian life in such a world, and know nothing of self-discipline, with its special means of grace, its checks, and restraints, and correctives, and yet be working out at all his salvation? The fear and trembling may well come in here.

. And this part of the saving work in one's own case includes a constant *self-denial.* Here the Apostle brings in the great pattern, Jesus Christ. Here he charges upon them a humility of temper, where there was every tendency to the opposite. Here he exhorts them to all the Christian graces, as they knew the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore he says, under the power of such an example, go on, and work out your own salvation; each of you go on wrestling with principalities and powers, striving to prevail against evil tempers, and to overcome spiritual foes, and to bring the soul into some likeness to the Great Exemplar, Jesus. Following the great Cross-bearer, let each man take up his own cross daily, and go on. Like the former process, it is a matter of every-day life. The occasions for it are constantly occurring. You must be denying yourselves ungodliness and wordly lust, and mortifying the flesh, with its affections. He who is not denying himself, is indulging himself in what shall be his ruin. The principle is plain. Do you apologize for your common tastes and tempers, that they are natural? Have you not learned that this human nature is just that which is totally depraved?—that this is that from which you are to be saved, if saved at all?—that the Christian warfare is against the natural appetites and aims?—that one who takes sides with Christ, takes sides against himself, condemning himself, and begging deliverance from self? Then it must needs be no strange thing—this *self-denial.* Then it must be a work immediately appertaining to one's own salvation, and he must be carrying it forward with the

highest energies of his being. He must continue in it with all persistency and perseverance, though it be painful, though it take out a right eye, or take off a right hand. Will you spare yourselves all pain? You will not save yourselves by this, but rather secure you perdition. "He that saveth his life, shall lose it." "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion." Do you think it all one, whether you cultivate an old temper, or keep it down—whether you allow an old habit, however mischievous, or strive to slay it—whether you put off the old man, and put on the new man, or not? What effect must the one course or the other have upon your own salvation, as a work to be wrought out with proper fear of yourself, and proper trembling for the result? In this great work, the efficient agent is the most delicate. The Holy Ghost may be grieved by your follies, resisted by your backwardness, and quenched by your worldliness of mind. You will *run the Christian race with patience*, only by *looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith.* You will *deny yourselves ungodliness and worldly lust*, only by *looking for that blessed hope.*

But especially, in all this work, and above all, must there be a hearty *self-renunciation.*—Work as you may, and as you must, if you are saved, yet there is not any or all of your work that can be boasted or trusted. Though you be working out your own salvation, still *your only Saviour is Christ. Your* work is always unfinished, imperfect, defective. *His* work is already finished and complete. Think of your salvation, at his hand, as "*ready to be revealed in the last time,*" and herein you may *greatly rejoice.* Think of it as *already wrought out* by your Redeemer. Think of him as gone, now, to prepare a place for you, and waiting till you enter upon the full possession. Think of your house eternal in the heavens—your crown of righteousness—your robe, and harp, and palm. This will lead you, more and more, to cast away all human confidences—all trusts in self—all pride of opinion—all personal pretension. Faith in Christ—in his plan, in his power, and in his promise—is to make you *work on*, cheerfully and successfully, to the end. It is He, from his risen glory, who sends forth his Spirit, which now works in your heart.

And these all are items of the work, which admit of measures and degrees. The *self-inspection* may find out to-day more than it knew yesterday of the inner man. The *self-discipline* may *keep under* some taste or appetite to-day, which gained the mastery yesterday. The *self-denial* may cheerfully carry a cross to-day, which was only too much for yesterday. The *self-renouncement* may give up an indulgence, or reject a confidence, to-day, which was only attempted in vain hitherto. And herein consists the constant opportunity for working out one's own salvation.

And, finally, in all that pertains to a thorough *self-devotement*, amidst a world of duties and necessities, there is demand for this progress and execution. Who has *finished* this work already, that

so many are at ease in Zion? Who is yet the specimen of that entire self-sacrifice that we profess, and that the Master demands? In the petty selfishness that is working freely and undenied in the man, how is he working out his own salvation? How—when he devotes himself so sparingly to Christ's service—when he is so hard at work for *himself*, that the work of the Master is *that* most entirely declined and denied? Can you not see that you have a work to do, if you are ever saved, which shall require many a mighty effort, many a large devotement, many a loosing of the grasp upon the heart's idols, and many a relinquishment for Christ, where now it would seem like tearing the soul asunder? Have you, then, nothing daily to do? Was this whole work, in all its immense magnitude, completed in your first repentings and wrestlings, and turnings unto God? Ah! your salvation is not yet *attained*. He that works not out the mighty problem, loses the soul. He who feels no fear, no trembling, only betrays an ignorance of the work in its true nature, and in its awful issues. It demands all the intensity of your minds, all the energy of your bodies, all your ardor of soul, all your helps in the means below, and in the efficient power above.

Hence the high INCENTIVES here given by the apostle. "*For it is God which worketh in you both the willing and the doing.*" Do you shrink away from the work, and say, "I cannot control these tempers. I am sold under sin. These tastes and desires are too strong for me?" But are they too mighty to be subdued by God's omnipotence? *He* worketh in you the willing and the doing. If you would ever quail before so vast an undertaking, with so many hindrances, and so little strength, consider that nothing is required of you without a promise in the Gospel to meet the case. An old Reformer used to have it for his Latin motto, "Only give what thou requirest, then require what thou wilt." You sink in despondency, and say you cannot work out your salvation. And you cannot, if there be no revealed methods, no warrants from above. You talk of God's will; but "this is the will of God, even your sanctification." Will you say that God cannot enable you? Will you forget the mercy-seat, where you can daily entreat according to daily necessities, and with a covenant covering all possible circumstances, and with promises set before you to plead?

Then, understand the Apostle. God does work in you both the will and the work—both the disposition and the execution. It is all your security that he is the efficient power. It is infinitely better than to have had for yourself the full, supreme control. *His* being at the head, secures the connection between the means and the ends, where, else, you might have used the means in vain, as in your own worldly enterprises. Prayer applies all the divine resources and promises.

And God works in you of *his good pleasure*. This is an encouragement. Do I say that, because he works savingly and freely,

he works blindly, arbitrarily, without plan, without explanation? No. Are you only to know that he works, but all in the dark—no clue to his working? Not so. The good pleasure of his will is revealed; it is expressed in the Gospel. The Gospel is called "the good pleasure of his will, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." He works according to that gracious plan, of which Christ Jesus is the way, and the truth, and the life. You have no salvation without Christ's work, yet none without your own work. And it is cheering to know, that this working in you God doeth, without those hindrances of the Devil which make your separate work miscarry.

And, remember, your salvation is not yet attained in the possession. It is set at the life's end, to command the highest energies of the lifetime. It is held out from the skies, to lift the soul up from the world. The man is to work it out, with a constant fear and trembling lest he fail, and lose so eternal a prize by negligence or ease. Remember; the promises of the Revelation are only for the man who endureth unto the end—who properly works out, to its consummation, what has been begun. If you desist, you give up all the splendid results.

And remember, too, that one's own salvation is to be worked out by all this personal, persevering labor, because the salvation *is his own*, and because this salvation itself shall be *according to* the deeds done in the body. A son may have an education given him, yet how different will it be, according as there is application and improvement, or not. One man may have a legacy left him, and yet how it may either be squandered or augmented by the daily conduct. Every phase and feature of each man's inheritance there, will bear the marks of his own labor here. It will be, in this high sense, according as he *himself has wrought it out.* For it must needs be this very soul of yours, as it is here exercised, disciplined, and expanded, that shall enter into rest, and its own works will follow it. I could ask you, then, if you have no care what *kind* of a salvation you shall work out for your own souls—whether it be like Paul's or like the dying thief's. You would care what kind of a *fortune* you shall work out—what kind of a name and character among men you shall work out. And when it is put with you to give a cast to the magnificence of your heavenly estates—when you may now be daily laying up treasures in heaven—and when your capacity for that eternal enjoyment, and your position in the heavenly throng, are surely to be determined by your present living—can you be heedless of such a summons to the majestic work? Regard each day, each act of life, as to be projected on the *scale of eternity.* And how many *ages upon ages must answer* to each *hour*, and get *a shape* from its doings? Who, then, can desist from the work, or who can work it out without fear and trembling? My brethren, *forget the things that are behind, and reach forth to those things that are before,* AND PRESS TOWARD THE

MARK FOR THE PRIZE OF THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS.

What shall we say to such as have not begun this work? He that lays no hand to his own salvation, is laboring at his own perdition. He is working *this* out for himself. Late and early, at home and abroad, lying down, and rising up, this one thing he does. In thought, in word, in action, always industrious at this, he is never remitting it, but ever giving it some further perfectness and fulness. Amongst means of grace, and under calls of the Gospel, on Sabbaths and other days, without rest, whatever else he does or leaves undone, this he is working out—working out to its awful completion. No work of man was ever so elaborate, so life-long, so full of toil and persistency, and success. And at the end, it is *his own perdition* that is the creature of his own handiwork—the product of his own industry—the achievement of his own lifetime. Stop this work, we beseech you, and "strive to enter in at the strait gate." It is made your great duty to be saved—your great sin, and shame, and sorrow, to be lost!

POWER WITH GOD.

A FRAGMENT FROM A DISCOURSE BY THE EDITOR.

"As a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."—GEN. xxii. 28.

THE GODLY MAN HAS POWER WITH GOD. Would that this truth were engraven indelibly upon every heart in which has been kindled the flame of divine love! Prayer is power to prevail with God. Viewed in this light, what a precious gift is it from heaven to men! It is a key to the storehouse of God. It opens the repository of heaven's choicest blessings, and brings them down to earth. Happy is he who possesses it. He has influence at the throne of God. He can move the arm that moves the destinies of the universe.

Christians who feel an interest in the conversion of their ungodly friends, seldom realize the amount of influence they possess at the mercy-seat. They do not take God at his word. They do not believe they have power to prevail with him. Their addresses to the throne of grace demonstrate their unbelief. They ask for small things; or if they pray for greater, they have little expectation of receiving them. Their language shows it. It is the prayer that will take no denial that prevails with God. It is the wrestling of Jacob. Jacob interceded all night with the Lord; and when the day dawned, and he was reminded that it was time for him to desist and attend to his flocks and herds, he replied, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." He *was* blest. God said to him, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob (that is, one who supplants another,) but Israel (warrior with God, as the name signifies); for as a prince hast thou power with God and with man, and hast prevailed."

Power with God! Oh, if his children believed, felt, realized this, what intercessions would they not make for an ungodly world! Power with God! Did the church feel this, as they ought, the moral foundations of the world would be moved, and the kingdom of the Messiah speedily and permanently established. They do not feel it. Why is it, when God seems almost to anticipate our faith, and to go before us in bestowing his blessings? Why is it, when we know they have received immediate and signal answers to our prayers for the impenitent? Why is it? How can we be so faithless, so skeptical, so ready to distrust God? Why,

every one who will give himself the trouble to watch the phenomena of the moral world, and to inquire for their causes, must see that the intercessions of the godly man prevail with God. Unconverted men even, with all their prejudices against spiritual religion, and all their obtuseness of moral vision, are generally too observing not to notice, and too honest not to acknowledge it. It is almost self-evident. The man who is eminently pious, walks with God; and it is plain as a sunbeam, that when he speaks, God hears.

We wonder and complain, sometimes, that our prayers for the outpouring of the Spirit, and for the conversion of sinners, are not answered. But have we wrestled with God? Have we been suitably impressed with a sense of the value of souls, and have we *besieged* the throne of grace for them? When have we agonized in prayer for their conversion? How often have our hearts yearned over them? How often, while reflecting upon their condition, have we, with tears, sought the mercy-seat, and "told Jesus?" How often has our private Bethel witnessed fervent, importunate intercession for them? When have we felt and interceded for their salvation, as Abraham felt and interceded for the cities of the plain? Has such incense as this ever ascended from our altars? Has such been the character of our prayers? And shall we, in whose breasts the Spirit has lighted up a flame of holy love, shall we feel little anxiety that others should share in that love? Shall we, who are heirs to a crown of unfading glory, and who hope soon to wear it, feel little interested to secure such a crown for our unconverted friends? Shall we withhold our intercessions, and fold our arms in apathy and indifference, in the midst of our ungodly friends and relations? Is it a time to sleep, when members of our own families are unreconciled to God, and exposed to his wrath?

We can scarcely open our eyes, without beholding those who are tenderly allied to us by the ties of friendship, and some who sustain a closer relation to us as our kindred, who "have no hope, and are without God in the world." They are "treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath." The edict of retribution has gone forth. They are already sentenced, and the storm of Jehovah's vengeance is impending.

O Christian! do you know that you have influence with God? Do you know what encouragement you have to intercede for those whom you love? You may avert the doom that threatens them. Your prayers may secure their introduction into the family of God, and a title to the rank and privileges of sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. Then, plead for their salvation. Plead with a warm heart. Plead with faith and earnestness, and implicit reliance on the efficacy of the Holy Ghost. Such intercessions are never thrown away.

XI.

THE NIGHT NO TIME FOR LABOR.

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"The night cometh, when no man can work."—JOHN ix. 4.

THE Sabbath is a day of rest. The labor, that is lawful and proper on other days of the week, must then be suspended. "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work."

The sin of our day is to set this divine law aside; to treat it as part and parcel of a venerable code, once in use, and of great value to an ancient people, but long since abrogated, and of no present obligation. Or, if it be retained as a part of the moral law, its sanctions are, for the most part, disregarded, and its claims neglected. But, in the days of Jesus of Nazareth, it was far otherwise. So strictly was the very letter of the law regarded, by Scribes and Pharisees, and the great body of the Jewish people, that even works of necessity and mercy were treated as transgressions, if performed on the Sabbath.

This erroneous interpretation and application our Saviour endeavored to correct, and frequently rebuked, even at the hazard of being himself treated as a Sabbath-breaker. We have an instance of the kind, in the chapter from which the text is taken. The interview with the man born blind, as here narrated, and the restoration of the man to sight, took place on the Sabbath. Knowing well what use his enemies would make of the transaction, and determined to put the seal of his reprobation on a superstition so inhuman and wicked, as well as to set an example of doing good at all times and on every occasion, he introduces his intention with this justification of the proceeding,—"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." He then gives sight to the blind, and dismisses him to his home.

Thus he teaches, most emphatically, that no opportunities of doing good are to be lost, or deferred, on account of the sacredness of the

"No good of worth sublime will Heaven permit,
To light on man as from the passing air;
The lamp of genius, though by nature lit,
If not protected, pruned, and fed with care,
Soon dies or runs to waste with fitful glare.
Then be thy thoughts to work divine addressed;
Do something—do it soon—with all thy might;
An angel's wing would droop if long at rest,
And God himself, inactive, were no longer blest."

Labor gives a zest to all our enjoyments. It makes the plainest food savory, gives buoyancy to our spirits, and sweetness to our sleep. "The sleep of a laboring man is sweet." That for which we labor, on which we bestow our strength, which has cost us much anxiety, thought, and effort of body or mind, acquires a peculiar value in our estimation. The fortune that we have earned by our own exertions is far more prized than the inheritance received from a friend departed. "The substance of a diligent man is precious." "In all labor there is profit."

We are not, therefore, to be understood as advocates for idleness, if we suggest, that the season for labor may be too greatly disproportioned to the season for rest and recreation. Our purpose is the very opposite, as will yet appear. We do not forget, that an apostle in the name of Christ has enjoined upon the followers of Jesus, exhorting and commanding them, "that with quietness they work and eat their own bread." No bread so sweet as your own—that which you have procured by your own labor. The religion of the gospel demands a full occupation of all our powers in the service of our God, and our fellow-men. It gives no countenance to those disorderly professors, who are described as "working not at all, but are busy-bodies"—not at work, but over work; as in the original. Its language is to one and all—"Study to be quiet, to do your own business, and to work with your own hands: that ye may walk honestly towards them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing." It speaks, in language of not unmerited severity, of those who "learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house: and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not."

Labor, therefore, whatever the indolent, the purse-proud, the slave-driver, and the petted child of fashion, may deem it, is honorable in all; in the prince as well as the peasant, the master as well as the servant, the mistress as well as the maid, the employer as well as the laborer. How busy is universal Nature! The heavens and the earth are incessantly at work, fulfilling the great purpose of their creation. "The heavens," says one, "do roll with unwearied motion; the sun and stars do perpetually dart their influence; the earth is ever laboring in the birth and nourishment of plants; the plants are drawing sap, and sprouting out fruits and seeds, to feed us and propagate themselves; the rivers are running, the seas are tossing, the winds are blustering, to keep the elements

sweet in which we live. . . . . Every living creature is employed in providing for its sustenance; the blessed spirits are always on the wing in dispatching the commands of God, and ministering succor to us; . . . yea, God himself, although immovably and infinitely happy, is yet immensely careful, and everlastingly busy." "My Father," saith Jesus, "worketh hitherto, and I work." So that it is literally true, that "all things are full of labor."

Well for us that it is so. What would this world be, but a wilderness, and its people but barbarians, were it not for the labor both of hands and heads? It is labor that has made man and the world in which he dwells what they are. We owe to it whatever is useful, curious, elegant, grand, and admirable in our edifices, equipage, furniture, modes of transit, and means of social and intellectual enjoyment. Labor is the source of all our wealth and worldly comfort.

Discard, then, at once and for ever, the thought, that it is mean, shameful, or a disgrace, to labor. Nothing is more honorable. No calling is more worthy of regard than that which demands laborious service. The man, whose labor and skill give increased value to the soil, or any of its products, is more to be honored than any idler, or even than he, through whose hands those products pass unchanged. Cherish the love of labor. Hold it in high esteem. It is the palladium of Independence, the parent of health, of energy, of virtue even, and a noble inheritance derived from the founders of our republic.

Be ashamed, not that your circumstances have made it necessary for you to toil, but that you are doing nothing, that you eat the fruit of other men's labors, that you render no equivalent for your dependence, that you live a life of idleness, are a mere drone in the hive, a hindrance and an incumbrance, a consumer but not a producer, a burden and a pest, a moth, and not a bee:—

> "How doth the little busy bee improve each shining hour,
> And gather honey all the day from every opening flower!
> In works of labor, or of skill, I would be busy too,
> For Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do."

See to it, then, that you have something to do, that you do it, and that you do it well; that you waste not your life in idleness, and spend an eternity in shame. The charge of the Great Master to all his servants is, "Occupy till I come."

But the wise man has very pertinently observed, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." Man cannot always work. The pure ethereal spirits round the throne may without ceasing, day and night, for ever continue the work of praise, or be ever on the wing. But these animal frames were not so made. They cannot endure incessant labor. The body soon feels the need of rest and relaxation, when its powers are tasked. It must frequently be recruited with food and

sleep, or it will lose the power to labor. Exhausted nature, when denied these indispensable means of relief and restoration, will flag and sink, crushed beneath the insupportable burden.

The all-wise Author of our being has made a two-fold provision for the alternation of labor and rest. By his own example in the beginning of the creation, and by positive enactment, he requires one seventh part of all our time to be given to the purposes of devotion, and exempted from ordinary labor. "In it thou shalt not do any work." "The Sabbath was made for man"—for man's comfort, health, strength, and salvation. It is the laborer's friend. It interposes between the master and the servant; and demands for the stalled jade a cessation from toil. Admirable provision! How wonderfully it promotes the vigor, and efficiency,—how greatly it prolongs the life, of him who keeps it! The man who breaks it will find that he robs himself more than his God. In keeping this commandment there is great reward.

Of the remaining portion of our time, it is said, "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work." But it is not to be expected that the whole gross of hours is to be incessantly occupied. Nor is such the meaning of the injunction. All our daily labor is to be done during the six days, and not on the seventh. Of these six days, as already intimated, a portion only can be given to work. Food must be taken; sleep, also; and recreation. Time, of course, must be allotted for these purposes, and in a certain ratio. It must be ample for the ends to be secured—must bear a reasonable proportion to that which is given to labor, or the power to labor will be diminished, and erelong exhausted, and life itself be unduly shortened. These laws of our being have been put to the fullest proof. They have developed themselves in universal experience.

These seasons of rest from labor, moreover, must recur at regular intervals, as appears from another provision of the Author of our being. The earth has, in a most wonderful manner, received from the Creator an impulse that, from the beginning, has driven it, once every 24 hours, around its axis, presenting to every portion of its surface a regular alternation of day and night. The light of the sun, so necessary to labor, is thus, at stated intervals, withdrawn. Obedient to the demands of their physical constitutions, all the orders of animated nature, with very few exceptions, seek, as the light departs, a season of repose. The fowls of the air, the beasts of the field, and man, also, find a law within them, requiring a cessation from labor. The brute creation obey this primeval law, and reap the reward of obedience. Man, too, when not corrupted by luxurious habits, and the laws of despotic fashion, obeys the requirements of his nature, and yields to the divine impulse.

This is the law to which the Saviour of man refers in the words of the text. That law requires all our work to be done by day, as much as the divine enactment of the Sabbath requires all our work to be done during the six days, and not on the seventh. "I must

work . . . . while it is day. The night cometh when no man can work." He appeals to a law, an established law, of nature; a law written on man's constitution;—to the universal sense of mankind. That sense has been fully ascertained, and put on record. Nothing pertaining to man has been more fully determined. Everywhere, and in all ages, the doctrine has been maintained, that the day, and not the night, is the time for work.

It is not asserted, nor does the Saviour mean to affirm, that work cannot be done at all by night. No one, surely, would risk his reputation by such an affirmation. We know it can. We know that it is done to an extent that demands investigation, inquiry, and even interposition. The text is one of many similar ones, in which the inability spoken of is not strictly of a physical nature. Work can be done by night, but not with impunity. It is such a transgression of a fixed law, as must result in serious injury to the transgressor. No man can sin against his own nature, and not feel the effects of it. Sooner or later the injury will be developed. When, therefore, it is said, "The night cometh when no man can work," we are to understand the Saviour as teaching, that, agreeably to a well-known and divinely-established law, man's daily labor is ordinarily and properly to be suspended by night.

Thus far we have unquestionable authority for our position. The will of God, in this matter, is fully ascertained, and in all respects concurs with man's best good. It is never safe to violate any law of God, much less a law of our own nature. It matters not who does it. Their doing it does not make it right. It still remains the law—the truth—that the night is the time for rest, for sleep.

The extent, to which the violation of this requirement is carried, is affecting very seriously the health and energies of the people. It is very common, as most of you know, for the lovers of pleasure, of both sexes, and all grades in society, to occupy, occasionally, nearly the whole night in the labor of the dance, and in the exciting and exhausting diversions of the ball-room and pleasure-party. The night is converted, by artificial means, into the brilliancy of the day, and the time that should be given to repose is squandered on the passion for mirth and folly. With a good constitution, you may endure it for a season; but "ye have sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sin will find you out." Sooner or later, according to the strength of that constitution, you will reap the fruit of your folly, with unavailing regret.

When it is remembered, that this devotion of a large portion of the night to folly, and at some seasons, and in certain circles, several nights of every week, is demanded by the laws of fashion, and that these laws are implicitly obeyed,—when, too, it is known, that they, who are subjects of the realm of fashion, are, for the most part, the offspring of constitutions thus broken down, and carry with-*in them* the consequent infirmities of such a birth and training,—

is it to be thought strange, that the deadly consumption sweeps away so large a portion of the young and lovely before they have lived out half their days? Must they not pay the forfeit of their folly, and suffer for the violation of the inexorable demands of their nature? Need we wonder that so many parents are called to weep in sackcloth over the dust of their manly sons and blooming daughters, cut down in the morning of their life, when they themselves have taught them to transgress this imperative law of their being? When shall it be, as God has ordained, that men will learn that the night is the time for rest?

It is greatly to be deplored, that so many of the trades are carried on by night—that many employers think it to be for their interest to keep their machinery in operation by night, as well as by day. It is a very great drawback to the pleasure with which we peruse the morning paper, that, in order to furnish us with the gratification, scores of our fellow-men have been obliged to labor all the night, or the greater part of it, in the setting of type, in the press-room, in the procuring of expresses, and the like. To them, it is a serious evil. It draws upon their very life-blood. But great as is the evil, I can now only allude to it.

In determining the proportions of time that may properly be devoted to labor, we have thus far been able only to distinguish between the day and the night, and to ascertain that our daily labor is ordinarily to be done "while it is day." We are yet to ascertain, by a separation of the day from the night, the proper proportion of time to be given to work. If the day be measured by the shining of the sun, it is nowhere of a uniform length. It differs in different latitudes, and in the same latitude at different seasons of the year. In such cases, it is obviously proper to ascertain the average relation of the day to the night throughout the world, and so to determine the question. Such was our Saviour's understanding of the matter. Thus he asks the question, on another occasion, "Are there not twelve hours in the day?" Such was the understanding of the world then, and such it is now. Twelve hours of sun, and twelve of shade, divide and fill up the day.

The day, therefore, is practically to be regarded as of twelve hours' duration, and no more. This is the portion of time during which labor is to be performed. A greater amount is in no sense requisite. It is enough for all practical purposes. During that time, the whole business of the day may and ought to be transacted. The labor of man need not, in an ordinary state of society, be prolonged beyond this rate, for the purposes of a comfortable sustenance.

Furthermore, it is capable of proof, that, where this proportion of time is exceeded habitually, the human frame ordinarily gives way, and suffers injury. It cannot endure it. I have already intimated, that exercise is indispensable to perfect health. This exercise, however, if unduly prolonged, or too active or laborious, becomes

hurtful, destructive of health. By careful observation from age to age, by extended investigation on the part of medical science, and of civilians, results have been attained, which clearly develop the fact, that the human system cannot ordinarily endure continued labor more than twelve hours daily, including the time needful for the taking of food.

So deep-seated and so general has been the conviction that such is the case, as to constrain the legislatures of enlightened nations to interpose between the avarice of the employer and the over-tasked laborer, by enactments defining the number of hours that shall ordinarily be reckoned as constituting a day's work. In the fourth year of Queen Elizabeth, A. D. 1563. it was enacted, in respect to laborers, that "if they work by the day or by the week, they must continue working from five in the morning till after seven at night, from the middle of March to the middle of September; and all the rest of the year, from twilight to twilight: only, from March to September, as aforesaid, they are to be allowed two hours for breakfast, dinner, and drinking; and from the middle of May to the middle of August, half an hour more for sleeping; and all the rest of the year, an hour and a half for breakfast and dinner: and for the absence of every hour, the master may stop one penny out of the wages." The utmost that could, even in that age of hardy, robust, and athletic men, be required, in the most favorable season of the year, as a day's labor, was twelve hours; while the average for the year came short of eleven.

In several of the States of our Union, laws have been passed in relation to the labor of convicts, the necessity of which has grown out of the same general fact to which I have alluded. In New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and Georgia, the following humane enactment has found a place among their laws:— "Such offenders (convicts), unless prevented by ill health, shall be employed in work every day in the year, except Sundays, and such days when they shall be confined in the solitary cells; and the hours of work, in each day, shall be as many as the season of the year (with an interval of half an hour for breakfast, and an hour for dinner) will permit; but not exceeding *eight* hours, in the months of November, December, and January; *nine* hours, in the months of February and October; and *ten* hours in the rest of the year." Nothing but a decided conviction of the inhumanity of exacting more than the human system will endure, could have prompted such an enactment, in the case of men whose crimes had made them amenable to the punishment of imprisonment at hard labor.

In the consolidated Slave Act of Jamaica, W. I., passed March 2d, 1792, provision was made for the allowance of several holidays to the unfortunate bondmen, and one day in every fortnight, exclusive of Sundays, to cultivate their own provision-grounds. Besides these provisions, it was enacted, "that every field-slave, on *such plantation* or settlement, shall, on work-days, be allowed,

according to custom, half an hour for breakfast, and two hours for dinner; and that no slave shall be compelled to any manner of field-work upon the plantation, before the hour of five in the morning, or after the hour of seven at night, except during the time of crop, under the penalty of fifty pounds." These laws were made by slaveholders, for the regulation of their own slaves, from whom they had every inducement to exact all the labor that could be performed, without seriously impairing their health, and shortening their lives. Yet the most that they dared to require was, a daily labor of eleven hours and a half, in at least two portions, with an interval of two hours for rest.

Such facts are not to be passed over in silence. They speak volumes for the position that I have now taken. It would be difficult to find any civilized people, at the present day, who would venture to enact a law requiring even convicts to labor at any other than in the day-time. Our own Revised Statutes simply demand, that they "shall be kept constantly employed at hard labor during the day-time, except when incapable of laboring by reason of sickness or bodily infirmity." It would be regarded as inhuman to require them to work by night.

The modern legislation of the British government has been in accordance with these views. In the 42d year of George III., 1802, an act was passed, at the instance of Sir Robert Peel, himself a manufacturer, by which the labor of apprentices in factories was limited to twelve hours, and not permitted at night. In 1816, the same distinguished commoner procured the passage of a resolution for a committee of the House of Commons to make investigation into the evils of the factory-system. Deep was the indignation, when the report of this committee brought out the fact, that great numbers of children even were worked from five in the morning till eight at night, all the year round; and that, in making up lost time, they frequently worked from five in the morning till ten at night. The inquiry resulted in the passage of an act, making it unlawful to require of any factory laborer, under eighteen years of age, more than sixty-nine hours of labor during the week, or eleven and a half hours daily.

In 1832, it was proposed to reduce the time to fifty-eight hours in the week, for all under eighteen years of age. This proposition gave rise to another commission of inquiry, fifteen in number, five of whom were of the medical profession, commonly known as the "Factory Commission." A vast amount of facts, bearing on this question, was thus collected, by which it was ascertained, that the hours of labor in Scotland were from twelve to twelve and a half; in the north-eastern district of England, twelve; in Manchester, twelve; and in the West of England, often not more than ten.

In 1841, another commission was raised, called the "Children's Employment Commission," who extended their investigations

into the condition of the laborer, in other trades and manufactures. Their reports, published in 1842 and 1843, are painfully interesting, and develop a vast amount of suffering among females and children, particularly occasioned by long confinement to work, and the occupation of a portion of the night in labor. In relation to the millinery establishments of the metropolis, Sir James Clarke, Bart., physician to the Queen, testified as follows:—"I have found the mode of life of these poor girls such as no constitution could long bear. Worked from six in the morning till twelve at night, with the exception of the short intervals allowed for their meals, in close rooms, and passing the few hours allowed for rest in still more close and crowded apartments—a mode of life more completely calculated to destroy human health could scarcely be contrived; and this at a period of life, when exercise in the open air, and a due proportion of rest, are essential to the development of the system."

No wonder that numerous and most highly respectable medical men should testify, in relation to this over-working and working by night, "Their constitution receives a shock, from which it never recovers. They may leave off work for a period, they may go into the country to their friends, but they never regain their health. Indigestion in its most severe form, palpitation of the heart, pulmonary affections threatening consumption, and various affections of the eyes, great constitutional weakness, indicated by a degree of pallor, or bloodless condition of the body,—prevail." Again, the report says, that "all the witnesses, medical and others, spoke of the very frequent occurrence of consumption, which carries off a large number of victims."

Such are some of the effects of overworking, of occupying a larger proportion of time than is proper in labor, of devoting the hours of the night, in part, as well as of the day, to toil, to close occupation. How truly might the humane and wise Redeemer speak of the night as the time "when no man can work!"—when no man can work, with impunity.

These remarks are applicable, not alone to the trades and handicrafts that require much muscular exertion, but to all kinds of business, and literary or mental labor. Any close and incessant occupation of the mind is labor, the hardest kind of labor, the most wearisome to the flesh, the most exhausting to the spirits, the most injurious to health. When, therefore, we speak of labor, we are to be understood as referring to the daily pursuits of business, whatever they may be. All business of this description should, if possible, be done by day, and not by night; should not occupy more than the twelve hours of the day. Nothing is gained, on the whole, by prolonging the labor of the day after nightfall.

Such is the general conviction of men engaged in mechanical and agricultural pursuits. It would be deemed oppressive and inhuman for the farmer, the builder, the manufacturer, in this land, to

exact more than ten hours, or at the most twelve, from those in their employ. Every morning, except on the Sabbath, you may see the industrious mechanic, and other laborers, pursuing their way, at seven o'clock, to their daily work. If you enter their shops at twelve, or at any time between twelve and one, you find their work suspended; and, as the clock strikes six in the evening, you may see them issuing from their places of labor, and almost thronging our thoroughfares. Their work is done for the day. The evening is theirs. They may recreate and rest. They may engage in the pleasing relaxations of social life, may obtain information and pleasure by reading, or engage in devotional exercises in the place of prayer, or be entertained by religious or scientific pleasures.

Or, if we betake ourselves to country life, the same rule of labor is found to prevail. At the going down of the sun, and as twilight begins, how affectingly does the scene remind us of the lovely picture sketched by Gray:—

"The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.
Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds."

How such a picture recalls the days of childhood and youth, when we, too, whose homes were removed from the whirl and dissipation of city life, were wont to revel in such scenes of rural bliss! Shall it ever be, we are ready to ask, with a long-drawn sigh, that such will again be our favored lot?

Alas! that we have nothing here, in this busy mart, to answer to the poet's sketch! No sweet repose to the wearied laborer, in numerous branches of trade and toil! No rest to the soles of their feet, or to their wearied hands! It is work, work, work; toil, toil, toil! The night, with many, is as busy as the day. From early morn until late at night, the poor drudge toils on, and wears out his life, his heart, his soul. Not an hour can be spared from the everlasting drudgery, for purposes of health. Wealth is all. To obtain it, all else must be sacrificed. Every wakeful hour must be exacted, every social comfort relinquished, everything like mental, and moral, and religious improvement discarded, as out of the question.

It has already been said, that, even in our cities, the daily labor of the mechanic and the craftsman is done at six of the clock in the evening. There are exceptions to be made to this general statement. The men who provide the clothing for our bodies, the shoes for our feet, bread and meat for our tables, and the morning news for our information, with others, must still toil on, and wear out their lives, in working by night for our gratification. Not to

speak of the thousands of seamstresses, of the feebler and gentler sex, whose necessities compel them to labor, of whom we have already heard, in the report of the British commission, and whose worn-out frames are weekly swelling the fearful item of consumption in our bills of mortality,—passing by all these, let me call your attention to the almost numberless shops and stores, by which our principal streets are illuminated night after night, until nine, ten, eleven, or even twelve o'clock. In each of these stores there is an employer—one or more. In most of them there are clerks, seldom less than two, and frequently a score or more. These employers and their clerks are engaged in traffic, exposing for sale the products of every land, and an infinite variety of goods designed for raiment, food, equipage, and convenience. From the earliest hour of the day, their work begins. As the mechanic passes by, at seven in the morning, to his well-regulated labor, he finds these places of business open, and prepared for the traffic of the day. As he returns from his toil, at six in the evening, they are open still. As he goes forth at night, and returns from a social circle, where he has tasted some of the purest enjoyments of life, still he finds that the poor trader and his clerks are yet on their feet, and pursuing their wearisome, exhausting work.

Why all this? What dire necessity is it, that compels so many of our tradesmen to pursue their business three, four, and even, in some cases, five and six hours longer in the day than the mechanic and his workmen? Why may not all the busy hum of trade be suspended, in all departments of business, at one and the same hour? Why, when the plane, the saw, the hammer, the sledge, the trowel, and the spade, are dropped, may not the place of merchandise be closed, and the long-confined, wearied tradesman, and his clerks, be set free? If work must be done after working hours, why not employ a double set of hands, as in many of the public offices now, and also in some private establishments?

On this topic you will indulge me for once, I trust, though it may seem foreign to my vocation. It is not foreign. It is one in which I, as a minister of the Gospel, have, and ought to have, a deep and abiding interest. I am set for the defence of human rights, as well as of the Gospel—the rights of man, as well as of God. It is my province to plead the cause of suffering humanity; to interpose between oppression and its victims; to give a trumpet-voice to the command, "Thou shalt not kill;" to remind my fellow-candidates for immortality, "that man doth not live by bread only;" that there are other things to be done in this world besides the getting of gain; and that time must be allowed and taken for domestic duties, for self-improvement, for the culture of the mind and the heart, and for the exercise of the varied social gifts of our Divine Benefactor.

You will indulge me, as one that has a right to speak on such a *theme*. It is from sad and painful experience that I testify. Are

any of you in the service of the merchant, as his agents or clerks? So was I, for five long years and more. Well do I know the exhausting nature of your employment. Fully have I experienced your privations. To this very day do I suffer from the long confinement of those wearisome hours, when, from six in the morning until ten and eleven at night, I scarcely knew any cessation, any relaxation, from the toils of trade; when, with morbid appetite, my daily food was taken in haste, with scarcely an opportunity for healthful digestion. As one, therefore, of yourselves—as one who, in the recollection of past griefs and grievances, can say, *quorum pars fui*—I may be permitted to speak. I must speak and plead. Humanity and religion alike demand it.

And why must I plead in vain? Will the employer not regard it? He will. He was once himself a clerk, and never can he forget his own privations. If then he was a slave to business, what is he now? A galley-slave. Has he not a home? But he is denied its comforts. Has he a wife and children? How seldom can he indulge himself in their society, save on the Sabbath; and how little can he care for the young immortals committed to his charge! How great the sacrifice to one, who is so constituted as as to derive his chief earthly enjoyment from the exercise and cultivation of the tender affections! Oh! no; the employer will not be deaf to our appeals. If some will be, others will not. It was at their request that I gave this subject a place in my pulpit discussions. Many of them are eager for the contemplated change, and have already taken an active and highly-commendable part in the agitation of the subject.

But others still hold out. On what ground? It is urged by some that it will be attended with pecuniary loss to the employer. To this objection it may be replied at once, that, if all trade and business be suspended at six or seven in the evening, ample time will be given in the day-time for the disposal of goods, and none the losers thereby. The trade that is now transacted in the evening will be brought into the day, and the same amount of goods disposed of. Such is now the case with the wholesale trade. No one suffers by putting an end to traffic in these immense establishments, at the going down of the sun.

It is questionable, however, whether, as at present conducted, the evening trade will pay expenses. Shoppers understand that there is a greater liability to deception as respects the quality, color, and completeness of goods, when seen only in the evening; and are slow to purchase them. If wise, they would always take the daylight for such purchases. If the cost of light and fuel be deducted from the profits, it will be found that the gains are small. A merchant, who has pursued the retail dry goods traffic in this city for thirty years, has assured me, that he has not paid his expenses after seven in the evening.

In this calculation, moreover, we are not to forget the saving of

time. Who can tell of how much advantage it would be to the employer to gain every day three or four hours for rest, recreation, social, moral, and religious improvement, and for the exercise of the kindly feelings of the soul? How much must a man earn by night-trading, in order to compensate him for such a loss?

Again, I ask, Why must we plead in vain, when we ask that a ten or twelve hour law be enacted, by common consent and imperious custom, in behalf of tradesmen and their clerks? It is objected, that it would be hazardous to the morals of the clerks. I know full well that the morals of the young men in our city are exposed to great hazard, and that many yearly fall victims to the destroyer. But is that a reason for treating them worse than convicts or slaves? Why not, then, keep all at work,—apprentices and journeymen, as well as clerks? Are the latter less intelligent than the former?—possessed of less firmness, self-control, and self-respect? It is not to be admitted for a moment. If it is safe in the one case, it is in the other.

Or, is it to be supposed that this over-working will favorably affect their morals? Recreation they will have. You cannot prevent it. It is inhuman to deny it to them. Their nature demands it. If you keep them employed until the hours for social visiting are past, and halls of instruction are closed, you drive them to the saloons, refectories, porter-houses, and houses of ill-fame, with which our city abounds. You create the very evil which you profess to guard against. All this I have seen, and affirm from abundant observation.

But treat them as other young men are treated; work them no longer than others are worked; give them the evening, after the toils of the day are past, and I will answer for them. They will abundantly repay your kindness—nay, your sense and exercise of justice. Many of them have families of their own, as well as yourselves, and will gladly be welcomed at home, where, in the exercise of the social affections, they will be all the better fitted to serve you on the morrow. Others are of that period of life when the heart naturally turns to the softer sex, in search of a companion for life. Now you compel them to occupy the Sabbath, or a part of it, in the needful endeavor to become thoroughly acquainted with the object towards whom they have turned their desires. Let them have their evenings, and they will seek admittance to the society of respectable females, than which there can scarcely be a greater safeguard to virtue. It is, next to divine grace in the heart, the best of all safeguards. Let them be admitted to the confidence and affection of virtuous, refined, and high-minded females, and they will strive to deserve it. They will not—they cannot, come reeking from the stews into such a presence. They will scorn it.

Opportunities will also be given, and embraced, for mental improvement. "The child is father of the man." The clerk is to be the merchant. It is of great importance that the merchant be in-

telligent, well trained, for the responsibilities of business and of public life, and accurately informed in all that pertains to a good education. It is demanded by the reputation of our mercantile community. But many of our clerks are obliged to seek employment at an early life, and before they have had the thorough discipline of education. If ignorant, they must continue so, according to the present mode of doing business. Give them the same opportunities that are enjoyed by the apprentice and the craftsman, and they need not remain in ignorance. Let them have the evening of every day, and you give them an impulse to improve themselves. They may then frequent, and with profit, the Mercantile Library, established for their special benefit; the vast and valuable stores of which the retail clerks can now enjoy scarcely at all, unless they give the sacred Sabbath to reading. Lectures and evening-schools may then be visited; and other opportunities for storing the mind with useful knowledge be embraced. Why should these privileges be denied them?

Last of all, let me plead with you to remember that the getting of gain, so far from being the great object for which we come into this world, and with which we should occupy ourselves here, is one of the smallest. When we make it the chief thing, the one only thing, as so many do, we sin against our own souls; we prefer the less to the greater, and suffer ourselves to be made the slaves of Mammon. It is enough, surely, to be thus occupied by day. The remainder of our wakeful hours are needed for higher, better purposes. We are not to forget that we are candidates for eternity, and that we have need to be daily engaged in preparation, in laying up treasures for heaven. The Christian may be greatly profited by the social devotional meetings of the evening. Our churches can scarcely thrive in spiritual matters without them. And yet the retail merchant and his clerks must be, for the most part, denied the profit and the pleasure of such means of grace; while our churches must be deprived of the attendance of a large portion of their brethren, because the business of the world must be extended into the night.

Let the desired reform be put into practice, and we shall have healthier, more vigorous, and more intelligent merchants, happier homes, more sociability, more refinement, and more opportunity for every species of mental, moral, and religious improvement. None will be impoverished,—all enriched by the change. None will be losers,—all gainers. Shall the reform be carried?

We put the question, not to the merchants alone, and shopkeepers, but to their customers. Just as soon as night-traffic ceases to be lucrative, it will be given up. The merchant will not keep open his store, merely to illumine the streets, nor to preserve the morals of his clerks. His public spirit and his philanthropy are not so fully developed. Whenever it costs him more to keep his clerks employed by night, than he makes by their labor, he will

close before night. Such a result may soon be brought about. Let the community resolve to abandon evening shopping altogether, and the shops and stores will all be closed. In the name of humanity, then, I call upon you to pledge yourselves to a TOTAL ABSTINENCE FROM EVENING SHOPPING. Buy all that you want by day. Have pity upon the poor prisoner behind the counter. Compel him not to wait and tend until nine and ten at night. Treat him not worse than you would the man that digs, or paves, or sweeps the streets, or carries the hod. Make him not a slave. Give him time to breathe the healthful air, to taste the sweets of domestic life, to improve his mind, to polish his manners, to enjoy the means of grace. Let him go free at night-fall.

May the time soon come when it shall be written over the door of every factory, shop, and store, and on every heart, "The night cometh, when no man can work."

XII.

FAITH, GENUINE AND SPURIOUS.

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"Faith without works is dead."—JAMES ii. 20.

THE great religious question with us is, "How shall man be just with God?" To this question different answers have been given. Some have gone to one extreme, holding that mere faith is sufficient, and that works of righteousness are not at all necessary to our acceptance with God, or to our enjoyment of his favor. Others have gone to the opposite extreme, holding that faith is not necessary at all, and that a correct life and a good moral character will insure any man's salvation. And even those who have avoided both these errors, have sometimes had but a confused idea of the real connection between faith and works.

There are two great principles on this subject set forth in Scripture. One is, "that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law"—that he cannot obtain salvation as a reward, or in payment for his righteous deeds, but by faith in Christ. The other is, that faith does not "make void the law"—does not take away the necessity of righteousness; that the faith required in the Gospel, cannot exist without producing real holiness of life. A very slight examination will show that the two are not inconsistent with each other—that confidence in the revealed mercy of God, may well harmonize with love to him, and with obedience to his law.

I propose to consider the second of these principles, as it is presented in the text:

FAITH, WITHOUT WORKS, IS DEAD.

1. Because *mere speculation is not the appropriate business of man.* A habit of mere speculation is possible. Man is capable of looking at truth abstractedly, or without any regard to its practical bearings. He may accustom himself to view the truths of science, or philosophy, or morals, or religion, simply for the gratification of his curiosity, or the exercise of his mind, like the general propositions of mathematics, which may be demonstrated and admired as

true, without any thought of applying them to practice, or without once asking whether there be any realities to which they correspond. And such speculations are very fascinating to many minds, and to some almost irresistible. There is a great deal of pleasure in these day-dreams of the intellect; in building palaces of clouds, beautiful to look at, harmonious in their proportions, fitly joined together and compacted in all their parts, but designed for no practical use. Much skill, and mental power, and taste, may be expended on them, and in such employment a man may wish to pass his life. And yet they are altogether out of place in a world like ours. This is a world of realities, of things that are practical—not of cloud-castles and day-dreams. Every man has a thousand interests that always demand his care; all the energies of his mind should be brought to bear upon practical things. He has no time and no strength to waste upon mere speculation—it is not his proper business here. The life of man is too short; he has none too much time for the practical affairs of life; he may fill up every hour with duty, and he ought. The flying moments are too few, and too precious, to be given to idle dreams, or employed in doing that which looks forward to no practical results. If man had nothing to do in the world—no appointed work, no appropriate business, no wants to supply, no interests to take care of, nothing to hope for, nothing to fear, no relations nor duties to his fellow-men, who might be affected by his conduct: if he had to choose perfect idleness, utter vacuity and emptiness of mind, or speculations upon abstract truth—then, of course, it were better he should do this, than do nothing, and such speculations would be his appropriate work. But he is reduced to no such alternative. He can find enough to do. He is not placed in a castle of indolence, or a paradise of ease; his wants will not take care of themselves; his desires will not be gratified without any effort of his own. Life is a mazy path, beset with dangers; and the dangers will not, of their own accord, keep out of his way, Mere speculation upon abstract truth, however correct, however beautiful it may be, will not keep him from starvation; it will not bring him the comforts of life; it will not guide him through its snares; it will not shield him from its ills. Nor will it discharge his duty to others: it will not feed the hungry; it will not comfort them that are bowed down; it will not bind up the broken heart. This is a world in ruins; a world full of misery and tears; and the relief of its sorrows affords full employment for the noblest intellect, and for the most enthusiastic feelings of good-will to man: but mere speculation will not wipe away a single tear, nor take off a single burden from the weary and the heavy-laden of earth. In its best estate it reaches no higher than that benevolence which says to them that are naked, and destitute of daily food, "Depart in peace; be ye warmed and filled"—but gives them not *those* things which they need.

It is so in religion. Mere speculation will not ease the soul. A

faith which looks at religious truth as an abstraction, and makes it subservient to no practical uses, is dead. It fails of doing its appropriate work: it was not made simply to exist, clear, it may be, and beautiful, as an icicle—and as useless. It is contrary to all the analogy of God's government, contrary to the first principles and the very idea of religion. Man as a religious being has something else to do than merely to speculate on truth, or merely to believe it without making its influence the moving power of his life. "Faith without works is dead"—dead to all the appropriate business of life—dead to all useful purposes; to all the ends for which we are placed on earth, and which we ought to fulfil. On all subjects, the theory and the practice of truth are united; they are made to go hand in hand; and what God hath joined together, man has no right to put asunder.

Man as a religious being has wants to supply: he is at enmity with God, and he needs peace; his heart is defiled with sin, and he needs a cleansing and sanctifying power; he has gone astray, and his erring feet need to be guided into the path of life; he is lost, and he needs salvation. And what shall it profit him to have the most correct views of God's plan of mercy; to see, as clearly as angels do, his ruin and his remedy—if he practically keeps aloof from that mercy, and will not apply that remedy to himself? What shall it avail him that he knows every step in the path of life, while he still walks in the road that leads to death? What propriety is there in his idle faith—in his fruitless speculations on religious truth—while his soul is trembling between heaven and hell? "Thou believest there is one God: thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble." Their faith is doubtless correct enough; but it is worthless: it does not work by love: it produces no fruits of holiness there: and it is at least quite as much out of place, and quite as worthless, on earth. A dying man, hastening to eternal retributions, has something else to do: his proper work is to secure the salvation of his soul; and until he has done this, all his speculations are of no avail; they may be correct and magnificent, but they are correct and magnificent trifles: and though he have all knowledge, and believe all mysteries, it will profit him not at all. His faith is out of place: it belongs to the tomb—to the dwelling of things that return to the dust—it is dead.

2. Faith without works is dead, because *the very design of requiring faith is that it may produce good works.*

There are but two uses to which truth can be put; two ends it is capable of answering—to be looked at, and to produce a practical effect. There is, doubtless, pleasure in admiring truth—as there is in admiring a painting or a landscape. Truth is the mind's landscape: whose glories it may search out, whose sunshine may make it glad, and in whose beauties it may rejoice.

The earth is full of the glory of Jehovah; the eye is never wea-

ried with beholding his wondrous works. When it was first revealed to the inhabitants of heaven, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. And doubtless angels, to this day, find pleasure in admiring this exhibition of his wisdom and power. And yet the world was made for some other end than merely to be admired. And truth also exists for some other purpose than merely to be admired; and unless it accomplishes something else, it might as well not be at all. There is much that is beautiful, much that is sublime, in the truths of science and philosophy: but their highest value does not lie in this, but in the practical effects they can be made to produce, and the uses to which they can be put. We might spare the beauty for the sake of the utility, but we could not spare the utility for the sake of the beauty. The shadows may be tinged with many a rainbow color, and may glitter gorgeously in the sun; but if there be no substance, what can they do? what are they worth in a world of realities?

Now it is not to be supposed that God has revealed to us the truths of the Gospel merely that we might look at them, and admire, and say, "How wonderful." The supposition is not in accordance with his character or his mode of dealing with us. There is nothing in his character from which we may suppose that he does anything for mere display. He did not make the world merely to show his creatures what he could do. He is not worshipped as though he needed anything: he dwells in light unapproachable; his happiness is perfect; it is not dependent on the homage of his creatures: it will not be diminished if they fail to admire his works—what need then had he to display his power? And in all the history of his ways, where is the record of anything that God has done for no other purpose than to call forth admiration? Neither has he made known truth to us simply that we might admire his wisdom, and wonder at the extent of his knowledge. The truths that we gather from his works, the truths that are thickly strewn in all places of his dominions, the truths that his Providence everywhere proclaims,—are all revealed, not for display, but for some useful end: and if the truth of the Gospel be an exception, it is the only exception in the universe, and the strangest. It would seem that if any truth is revealed for useful purposes, it must be this—truth which relates to the things of eternity, to interests whose importance eternity alone will enable us fully to understand; truth which concerns the life and death of the soul; truth which is so eminently practical in its appearance; which is capable of producing such great effects; so mighty to the pulling down of strong holds; which can burst asunder the iron chains of habit, and unloose those who were fast bound in sin; truth which is quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword; truth which God himself has likened to a fire, and to a hammer that breaketh the flinty rock in pieces: it cannot be that this truth was revealed *merely* to be admired.

There is but one other supposition: that religious truth is revealed, and our faith in it required, that it may produce its appropriate practical effects—that, as we are required to love our neighbor as ourselves, not that we may say in his necessities, "Be thou warmed and filled," and give him nothing; but that we may do the *works* of benevolence; so we are required to exercise faith in the Gospel, that we may do the works and show the effects of faith. The effects of faith, the legitimate operations of sacred truth, are, holy affections in the heart, and a life of obedience to the commands of God. God does not ask men to believe the Gospel and go on in sin. He has not set forth Christ and his cross as the objects of our faith, that we should believe and wonder and despise; but that our faith should work by love. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid! yea, we establish the law." We are not to go on in sin because we have believed in the abounding grace of God: the object of our faith is to make us dead unto sin, and "how shall we, who are dead unto sin, live any longer therein?" Its object is to make us the servants of God, and how shall we still consecrate ourselves to the service of sin? The "end of our faith" is "the salvation of our souls"—but it is a holy salvation—a deliverance from the power of evil—a purification of the unclean heart—a new creation, after God, in righteousness and true holiness. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?" It is the very design of our faith, that it may deliver us from the enticements of the world, and cast off its chains; that our affections, no longer bound to earth, may rise, and rest upon God, and upon things in heaven. God requires of us faith, that we may be purified by it; that we may be fitted to dwell in heaven, and be made like those holy spirits that worship before his throne. He requires of us faith, that we may make known on earth the riches of his grace; that we may tell from our own experience the constraining power of his love; that we may be living examples of the power of godliness; that our light may so shine before men, that they shall see our good works, and glorify God. He does not ask us to believe that we may be idle, and hang as dead weights upon the church; but that we may be careful to maintain good works. Practical righteousness, entire consecration, "holiness to the Lord," are the appropriate effects of the Christian's faith, and the very effects it was designed to produce. Of course, then, if our faith does not produce these effects, if it does not lead us to these works, it is worthless—it is dead. It will not restore the sick man to health, to have admired the remedy, if he has not used it: and it will not save the soul, to have admired the plan of salvation, to have believed it in all its features, while its conditions were not performed. And it will be no sufficient answer to the questions of the judgment-day, that we have never doubted the truth of the

Gospel, or that we have thought it a glorious Gospel, and wondered at its beauties and its mighty power. The very design for which God requires our faith is, that it may make us holy, that it may produce good works; and unless it does this, it cannot save us. We shall learn at the last day, if we have not learned before, that faith without works is dead—dead, because it fails of answering its design—dead, because it does nothing—because it is useless—because it gives no signs of life.

3. Faith without works is dead, because *the practice of the precepts of the Gospel is necessary, to keep alive our faith in it.*

Truth disregarded, soon vanishes from the mind: principles not carried out, motives not acted upon, are as though they were not. The mind is not so made that it will hold fast to truths that produce no effect upon it, that do not influence a man's conduct, nor become incorporated with his life. There is nothing to keep such truths in the mind; there is no reason why they should remain: and they will pass away—our faith in them will die of indolence and neglect. If, therefore, we would have these truths vividly present before us; if we would keep alive our faith in them; we must act them out; our conduct must be consistent with our faith; we must live as though we really believed them.

Faith is not self-existent. It does not follow, because it once existed, that it still is. A man has no real, living belief in truths that have long since vanished from the mind, which have left no apparent trace, and which memory never recalls. He may have had a faith—but it is no more—it is dead, It is so with the Gospel. Whatsoever faith we have in it must be kept alive by exercise: its objects must be kept before the mind by obeying the precepts which the Gospel gives. The theory and the practice must go together, or both will cease to exist.

Besides, the truths of the Gospel are of a spiritual nature; they relate to spiritual things; they cannot be fully understood until they become a part of our own experience. Who can understand what is meant by the law of God dwelling in the heart—the peace of God that passeth all understanding—the fellowship with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ—the witness of the Spirit—the joy that is unspeakable and full of glory? They are unmeaning sounds to the world—who can understand them, till he knows them from his own experience? And how shall a man have faith in that which he does not know? And how shall he know the things of the Gospel, unless he obeys its commands? "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." It is not enough that we have once assented to the truths of the Gospel—unless we have acted upon them, that faith was dead long ago. These truths cannot be to us living realities unless they regulate our lives. Faith *without* works is an absurdity. Faith in the Gospel is faith in *something* that requires holiness; that denounces woe upon trans-

gressors; that declares there is no peace to the wicked; that tells us, without holiness no man shall see the Lord. Now, if a man lives without regarding these declarations, if he neglects the works of holiness, has he faith? does he believe these things? Is it possible for what he calls his faith to live, while it is thus contradicted by all his conduct? is it not properly declared to be dead? It is dead because it has none of the power and the activity of life; because without exercise it cannot live; nor without practical obedience to those precepts which it pretends to hold.

4. Faith without works is dead, because *it is the faith of a dead heart.*

The heart which is unmoved by the objects of Christian faith, is properly called dead. There are no objects in the universe that have so much moral power; that are so well suited to kindle the soul with enthusiasm, and awaken every energy of the mind. They appeal to every high principle, to every noble sentiment, to every generous feeling, to all the susceptibilities of the heart. They place before us the brightest visions of hope: they unveil the scenes of heaven, and invite us to dwell in light and glory there. They tell of the dark regions of despair, and the fierceness of the wrath of God—and they call upon us to escape. They surround us, they press upon us, with motives to holiness of infinite value—motives beyond those which angels feel. Angels have seen the excellence of God; they have known his goodness, and they can feel its power: but they have never known his compassion towards them as sinners; they have never tasted his pardoning grace; the scene on Calvary was not for their personal advantage; precious blood has not been shed for them; the appeals of a dying Saviour were not addressed to them; the motives that cluster around the cross were not placed before them. These mighty influences are brought to bear only upon the lost of the human race:—and is not that man's heart dead which does not feel their constraining power? is not all spiritual life absent? is not all cold, lifeless, repulsive as the dead?

The eyes of the dead may be fixed in ghastly stare upon the glories of creation; the ears of the dead may be surrounded with all the exciting sounds of life—but no life is aroused, no action is called forth. So it is with that heart and that faith which can behold unmoved the objects which the Gospel reveals: the eyes may be open, but the glorious truths that pass before them kindle no emotions of hope, excite no pulsations of love in the heart, call forth no signs of spiritual activity—because it is the gaze of death. What claims to life has the heart that can behold the cross of Christ, and not be melted into tears, and penitence, and love? What claims to life has the faith which can look upon the unfathomed depths of God's mercy, which can estimate the sufferings of Christ, and count the value of his precious blood—and then produce no

works of gratitude and holiness? How much better is it than the faith of him who sleeps in the tomb? Is not that heart which beholds the Gospel and the way of life unmoved—is not the faith which views them with cool indifference, properly called dead?

We learn from this subject,

1. The real nature of the faith required in the Gospel. It is not a mere speculation; not a mere intellectual perception of the truth; not a mere admiration for the harmonies, the glories, and the beautiful relations of truth; not an inefficient, a cold, a lifeless belief—but a faith that works by love; a faith that shall be a living, active principle in the soul—helping it to burst the bonds of sin—cleansing it of all that is unholy—urging it on to deeds of righteousness. God asks for no other faith—no other will save the soul. He values no faith that is consistent with an unholy life, or which produces no sanctifying effects upon the heart. It is a mockery, and an insult to his grace.

2. We may learn the nature of the connection between faith and works. There is a real connection. Neither can exist alone. Their life is one; and if one dies, the other cannot live. Good works are the fruit and the legitimate effect of faith; and any such faith as God requires—any faith which is not worthless, which is not dead—must produce them of necessity, and in its own nature.

They are the only evidence of the existence of faith. What proof is there of life, if there be none of the movements, the breathings, the actions of life? If the question be, whether a body is living, we ask: Does it breathe? Does it move? Does the life-blood hasten through its channels? If not, where is the evidence of its life? So, if the inquiry concerns the existence of faith, we ask: Does it move? Has it the warm pulsations of life? Does it produce any of the actions of life? If not, it is dead. There can be no proofs of its existence, if there be no works of holiness.

3. We learn that there is a great amount of dead faith in the church. There is much that is fruitless—much that is without works—much that has no good influence upon its possessors or upon the world—much that is worthless—much that will not endure the tests of the judgment-day—much that will perish when "the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is."

Is it not then wise in us, my Christian friends, to anticipate the searching inquiries of the last day—to ask ourselves *now* concerning the reality of our faith? Does it work by love? Does it lead us to be active in serving God? Does it make us love and imitate Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith? Let us put these questions now to our own hearts—lest we learn too late that our faith has no saving power, and read our doom in the declaration, "Faith without works is dead."

XIII.

THE TERMS OF SALVATION.

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"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."—ROM. x. 9.

VARIED and complicated as God's revelation may appear, extended as are the periods over which its records are spread, minute and bare of thought as its genealogical details may seem, and uninteresting and unintelligible as many parts of the book may be in matter and style; yet all that is essential to salvation is compressed within limits astonishingly narrow, and expressed in terms surprisingly clear. There is a focal point to which all its rays converge, which the blindest eye might see, and the darkest mind confess the intensity of its illumination.

This was true even of the law of Moses—the epitome of the whole was contained in ten short precepts, and the sum and substance of these were so fully included in the one exercise of love to God and man, that the whole law is said to be fulfilled by love. Hence, Moses said to his nation, "The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." Thus, they could not plead ignorance in justification of their disobedience.

The Apostle accommodates the same words to the gospel terms of salvation. God does not require impossibilities of you, my unconverted friends. He is not a hard master, to mock your inability and insult your woes. He hath not complicated and mystified the conditions of your salvation, that you should find it difficult to comprehend and know them. The righteousness of faith does not encourage you in inquiring, "Who shall ascend into heaven to bring Christ down? nor, who shall descend into the deep, to bring him up again from the dead?" nor does it suggest anything impracticable or impossible; but it comes to tell you that the word, or the specific thing by which you may obtain salvation, is nigh you, in your mouth and in your heart, being the word of faith, the doctrine and duty of faith, preached in the gospel, "that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

Here it is, my friends—*believe, confess,* and the infinite blessing of God's favor here, and life everlasting hereafter, will pour their full effulgence upon your souls. "This is the *work* of God, that ye *believe* on him whom he hath sent."

The *availableness* of the gospel remedy to the most debilitated and hopeless, is its crowning excellence. In this respect it is like God's remedy for the dying Israelites in the wilderness, who had only to *look* to the brazen serpent and live. We have only to *believe* on the Lord Jesus Christ, and we shall be saved; to *behold* the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, and then to follow up our faith with its appropriate modes of declaration or confession. If ordinances, and forms, and creeds, and a long course of outward amendments, were essential to salvation, what could the dying thief have done amid the agony and distraction of crucifixion, whose first prayer appears to have been reserved for the last hour of life? Who would dare to preach a gospel thus encumbered by conditions, thus unavailing in the extremest moments of agony and woe?

Glad should I be, my friends, to make the *idea of believing* clear to your minds. I am aware of the difficulty of doing it, partly on account of the much that has been said and written to confuse and darken your thinking on the subject, and partly from your liability to regard faith as simply the passive effect of evidence upon your reason, which you can no more make otherwise than you can alter the impression of light upon your eyes. How shall I disabuse your minds of this fatal deception, so as to make you feel, that believing in Jesus is simply yielding yourselves to all the legitimate tendencies of that pure and holy ideal and influence with which his name and truth are associated? Dark as your mind is, depraved and guilty as are your hearts and lives, the word is still *within* you, in the form of all those remonstrances against your sins, and all that solemn pleading with your reason and conscience in behalf of God and holiness, and all those fearful anticipations of a judgment to come, with which the truth of Christ is connected in your spiritual nature and history. I solemnly warn you against such an interpretation or use of the doctrine of depravity, as to assume or suppose that the word of Christ can have no response in your fallen nature. Even devils feel it and tremble; and how much may you who are under the mediatorial reign be supposed to

"Feel how awful goodness is!"

Forget not the affirmation of Paul in the connection of my text, that "the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach." Its powerful responses are within every human bosom who seriously attends to it, and you have only to repress what is contrary, and give yourselves up to its leading without reserve, to realize the blessed result of "believing with the heart unto righteousness."

Not to be too abstract, let me add, believing that God raised Christ from the dead, is taking hold of that fact as a reality, so that it is the same to us as those things which we hear, see, or know, and the same as if we had been present and witnessed the process of the resurrection, from the first pulsating struggle of life to resume its functions in the dead body of Jesus, till, disencumbered of his grave-clothes, he ascended from the stony confines of the sepulchre to the opening expanse of the dawning morning.

This event is the organ to our mind of two classes of truths—the *visible* and the *invisible*, the *literal* and the *spiritual*, the first of which we may believe without believing the other.

The *visible* or *literal* facts of Christ's resurrection are those which are addressed to the *outward senses*. The resurrection of the dead body of Jesus from the tomb of Joseph, where on the eve of the crucifixion it had been deposited by his afflicted followers, is just as much a matter of outward history as Alexander's passage of the Granicus, or Cæsar's of the Rubicon. How touching was the scene! The nails were extracted from his hands and feet, and his body was lowered from the cross, on which it had just expired in the pains of an agonized death. Here it lies pale and cold, to assure the cruel soldiers that their work had already been so terribly effective, that the bones need not be broken to complete the process of dissolution. But one of them, to make assurance sure, perforates his side with his spear, when the transfixed heart discharged its sanguinary contents of blood and water. The last drop of that divine fountain is poured out on the altar of his love to man.

When the soldiers departed, his mother, through whose soul a sword had pierced, and his sorrowing disciples, gathered round his lifeless but still loved remains, with touching interest prepared them for the burial, and then bore them to Joseph's new tomb; whence, after performing sepulchral rites, they retired smitten with the horrors of the scene, and with hearts wrung with anguish at the dreadful reality, that their Lord was crucified and slain. They waited with trembling but unbelieving anxiety for the morning of the resurrection; and when they were early at the sepulchre and found that he had indeed risen, they believed not for joy and amazement. And nothing finally overcame their doubts, but repeated and familiar interviews with him after his resurrection. Thus gradually, thus certainly, thus demonstrably, this sealing fact of revealed religion, by which life and immortality were brought to light, was unfolded to the minds of men, and became a *fixed fact* in the history of the human race.

Their testimony, often repeated in words, but still more powerfully affirmed in the voluntary sacrifices of ease, reputation, and life, in proclaiming to the world Jesus and the resurrection, together with the establishment of Christianity and the infinite train

of results which have followed, conspire to settle the resurrection of Christ on an immutable basis of evidence.

Now, all these outward facts a person may take hold of by a firm faith, and yet he may not be saved. This faith is genuine as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough to grasp those peculiar truths and influences therein involved, which are the organs of salvation to the soul.

There is an *invisible* and *spiritual* class of facts herewith associated, which we must believe before we can be saved. And it is to the belief of these that the Apostle alludes in our text; such as, that Christ was the Son of God, being thus declared with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead; that the law which he illustrated by his life is holy, just, and good, and of universal obligation; that we are guilty in proportion to our dereliction from it, and hence that we are by nature in a ruined condition, without God and without hope in the world; that the object of Christ's life, death, and resurrection, was to save us from our sins; that his divine attributes, thus fully demonstrated by his resurrection, qualify him for the work; that he is to be our Judge as well as our Saviour, calling us from the grave, of which he was the first-fruits, that we may receive at his hands according to the deeds done in the body; and above all, that the ideal of virtue, goodness, holiness, thus present in Christ, is attainable; and that, by beholding him, we may be transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. It is true, these several points may not come before a convicted sinner in the form and order here stated; but if we analyze his feelings, we shall find them *in fact* present and operative in the process of his spiritual transformation.

The significance of any given document or event comes from its connecting facts and relations, more than from anything in itself. If a gifted mind had written, as an exercise in composition, precisely such a document as our Declaration of Independence, word for word, it might have been regarded as an evidence of talent, but it would have had nothing of the significance of that document in its actual relations to our nation and to mankind. As a declaration of rights on the part of a people struggling against oppression, who stood ready to maintain it with life, property, and sacred honor, it has acquired a position in the world of mind, and in the memory of posterity, to which the composition in itself could never have raised it. The same amount of blood and carnage might accrue from a mob as from the battle of Bunker Hill, and yet one would be reckoned a deed of infamy, as the other is of glory.

So, great as a dead man's resurrection is, in itself considered, it could have nothing of the peculiar interest of Christ's resurrection in it. *He* was raised up as God manifest in the flesh; as the long-promised Messiah; as a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; as the brightness of the Father's glory and the express

image of his person, from whose character the radiations of Divinity are reflected to our view, that we may see them without being dazzled and overwhelmed with

"The darkness of light insufferable;"

as the High Priest of our profession, who, after making his soul an offering for sin, in fulfilment of the types of the previous dispensations, entered into heaven itself, there to appear on the right hand of God in our behalf; yea, he was raised up to be the Judge of the quick and the dead, and to give the assured hope, that though a man die, yet shall he live again; and thus, his resurrection becomes to us an organ of the highest facts, influences, and associations ever brought within the compass of the human intellect, the keystone in the arch of redemption.

To believe this great fact in all its spiritual relations *with the heart*, is to believe it in the exercise of its appropriate affections and practices; yea, it is to surrender to its leading all the voluntary powers of our nature, so that Christ shall become to us the chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely. Let me give you an illustration: In looking over a marine list, we might, perhaps, notice the arrival of a hundred ships in the different ports of the world, and fully believe it, with little or no interest in the matter. But let one of us be the father of a son at sea, from whom he had not heard for so long a time that he had given him up as lost, see the arrival of the ship in which he sailed announced, and do you not think he would feel interested? All the feelings of the father gush up, and he believes *with his heart*. His faith in that arrival is no stronger than in any other, but his heart has much more to do with it.

So when sinners believe in the spiritual connections of Christ's resurrection, how powerfully are their feelings awakened! It becomes now a matter of inward experience that Christ has died for *their* sins, and rose again for *their* justification. Their conscience apprehends the holiness, faithfulness, and truth which shine in the person of Jesus, as the pattern of what they themselves ought to be. And just in proportion as they see, from what Christ was, what they ought to be, they abhor themselves and repent in dust and ashes. What contortions of conscience are sometimes awakened by this heart-believing? How did Jewish consciences writhe under its lacerations on the day of Pentecost! It is true, it is true, O God, that we have crucified the Lord of glory and hanged him on a tree. We are lost, we are lost. Men and brethren, what shall we do? How shall we escape the wrath of God? Such were *their* feelings, and such will be *ours* when faith reveals the relation of our sins to Christ's death. It gives us a sense of wonderful nearness to God. We may not rejoice in that nearness, because of the guilty fears which it awakens, and we see not how we

can escape the vengeance of the violated law. Those who really feel themselves guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, might even be willing that the rocks should fall upon them and the mountains cover them, yea, might hie them to the blackness of darkness forever, if by these means they could hide themselves from him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.

It is not till we advance a step beyond the holiness of God and his law shining in the person of his Son, that we come to take hold on the blood thus shed by our own hands, as the means of cancelling our guilt, as an all-sufficient atonement to render God just in justifying us, and to give us all joy and peace in believing. Then it is that we believe with a heart unto righteousness, or then it is, that by the power of the Spirit, we believe ourselves into the actual possession of heart holiness, and into that state of favor wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Then it is, that we are begotten to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and eternal life begins its reign in our souls, so as to be a vital and most satisfactory experience, affiliating us to God, giving us the spirit of adoption—God our Father, heaven our home, Christ our Elder Brother, and the Spirit witnessing with our spirits that we are indeed born of God. Then it is, that we become new creatures—old things pass away and all things become new.

I must now insist upon *confession*, as a part of this process no less necessary than believing, beginning, progressing, ending with it, so that the latter is an impossibility without the former. Indeed, confession in our text is put first, because it is in most cases the antecedent of any controlling influence of faith over us—"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." But in the next verse the order is reversed, and faith is put first: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." It would thus appear that they are collateral exercises, going hand in hand till the soul enters into a justified state and into heavenly glory. This confession, I conceive, includes any mode of declaring our *acquaintance* with Christ, as the original seems to indicate, or our sense of needing a Saviour up to the extent of our feeling it at the time, and it may specially refer to a profession of our faith by submitting to the ordinances which Christ has instituted for this purpose.

You have, my unconverted friends, some degree of sensibility to divine things, some impression of needing a Saviour, some anxiety in reference to a judgment to come, and you cannot deny that gospel truth has met with a degree of response from your own minds and hearts. Thus the word is nigh you, even in your mouth, and in your heart. But these inward impressions of the truth cannot *control* your minds nor produce saving faith, so long as they are repressed and concealed, and are not out-spoken in the ears of

Christians and the audience of the world. Think of that solemn declaration of our Lord, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels."

How can a change from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, the greatest moral transition known to the universe, take place in your minds, without some form of confession or outward manifestation? Such is the connection between the inward and the outward, the thought and its tendencies to expression in words, in our natures, that the strong impulse of Christ's resurrection could not be felt within, without being manifested in word and deed. To repress and conceal, is to extinguish the light of the truth from our hearts. It was concealment in Nicodemus that rendered his piety for a time so undecided and unavailing. And not a few among us are kept in a similar condition from the same cause. How many are deeply impressed with the holiness of Christ, the justice of the divine law—who are deterred by pride, the fear of man, and various influences, from confessing what they feel, and the consequence is, like the seed that fell by the wayside, it is "caught away by the wicked one," and no good results ensue. Refusing to speak of your convictions is sure to repress them, strong as they may be, while the feeblest spark may be fanned to a flame by giving it vent and air. How true is it, that except a man deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Christ, he cannot be his disciple!

Those who think themselves *secret* believers, should respect the saving nature of their faith. A faith that has not sufficient strength to develop itself in confession, cannot be relied on as genuine or saving. To such, Jesus, because he knows all men, will not commit himself. He sees that their piety is without root or the power of endurance, like that of the stony ground hearers. Let all secret believers consider how necessary it is to become so openly, how false this cautious concealment is to a Saviour so precious and a cause so glorious, and how imperious is the obligation which they are under to go forth without the camp, bearing the reproach of Christ.

God always presents some outward test of our inward feelings, and unless we abide it, our feelings cannot be right. Adam had his test in the prohibited tree; Nicodemus his in acknowledging his lowly Messiah before an unbelieving generation; the assembly on Mars hill theirs in cleaving to one so rude in speech as Paul, with Dionysius, Damaris, and others; and we have ours, perhaps, in reference to a meeting for inquiry, to private conversation with a minister or Christian on the interests of our souls, or in some other way. Who is able to meet these various modes of testing our inward feelings, and thus of confessing Christ before men, as often as occasion may require, up to the extent that our experience will justify? What we do not feel, we are not required to confess;

but why should we not boldly acknowledge all that God has done for our souls, whether it be little or much? Let us not despise the day of small things.

The tendency of these confessions, whether in a free conversation on the state of our souls, or in submitting to the ordinances of religion, is to strengthen the principle of faith, and lead to a more decided influence of the gospel over our hearts and lives. Thus it is that we acquire power over temptation, strengthen and settle in us the principles of righteousness, and enter fully into the joy of God's great salvation. Think not that you are equal to the task of leading a Christian life, without these divinely appointed auxiliaries to your faith. Piety nourished in secret, has but a pale and sickly life, like plants in a dark cellar, which bloom without fruit and die without hope. It must have air, and light, and action, or how can it have increase or productiveness?

CONCLUSION.

1. *The precise nature of the Spirit's work in our regeneration is herein revealed.* It is that of unfolding the spiritual connections of Christ's resurrection. The word of the truth of the gospel states the *outward*, but the Spirit makes us see the *inward* facts and relations of this great subject. It is through his influence that the commandment comes, sin revives, and we die. He makes Christ's love in dying for us the means of begetting love in us, thus shedding it abroad in our hearts, and filling us with all joy and peace in believing. He witnesses with our spirits that we are born of God, by exciting in us the affections of the new birth. It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing.

2. Sinners must consider, however, that *their voluntary co-operation is necessary throughout this process.* The holiness and love of Christ, distinctly brought to our view, are adapted to raise in our minds a class of emotions which only require an appropriate action on our part to lead on to saving results. We can no more avoid being affected by them, when thus brought to our view, than we can avoid being touched by the story of the Roman daughter, whose father was condemned to death by starvation, and whom she kept alive in prison by means of the aliment which nature had provided for her new-born infant. The most undutiful children feel the beauty of this story, and if they were only to *act* on the impression, they would become more kind and respectful to their parents.

So, the worst of sinners cannot fail of being impressed with Christ's love in dying for sinful men, when they seriously contemplate the subject in the light of his resurrection, setting forth the greatness and glory of his character. Action on this impression *in* confessing their sins, is faith, and the more decisive and longer

continued this action is, the more controlling the influence of the faith becomes, till at length, through the accompanying agency of the Holy Spirit, they are renewed to obedience and begotten to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The work of the Spirit in the production of saving faith, essential as it is, is never effectual, without the voluntary co-operation of the sinner himself in some form of confession or manifestation.

3. Herein also we see *the precise nature of unbelief.* It is not simply the unconvinced reason withholding its assent from a lack of evidence, but it is a rebellion of the will against those decrees which the conscience gives forth under the promptings of the truth as it is in Jesus. Unbelief consists in resisting the impression of obligation to reform our lives, which the facts connected with Christ's resurrection make upon our minds, and hence it is the opposite of confession, it is a denial of Christ before men.

If the truth as it is in Jesus did not contain in itself a powerful call upon us to break off our sins by righteousness, how should our unbelief and resistance to it be esteemed so great a crime? How should this be singled out from all our other sins, as the reason of our being doomed to hell? If the word of Christ was not *in* the sinner, under the form of this powerful movement of conscience towards a new life, how should his resistance to it involve a guilt so black and a doom so fearful? Did not the sin of the Jews consist in opposing themselves to their inward sense of Christ's holiness and love, because his character did not accord in other respects to their worldly expectations from the Messiah? They sacrificed his holiness to their pride, his love to their ambition, and in this their sealing sin consisted.

Our faith, therefore, is the reverse of this process; it is following out all the tendencies of this holiness and love, and actively repressing and crucifying pride, ambition, avarice, and every contrary tendency. It is confessing Christ before men, coinciding and agreeing with Christ, and thus both faith and unbelief is a voluntary process throughout, never depending on the sufficiency or insufficiency of evidence addressed to the reason.

Finally, sinners may see how *impossible it is for them to occupy a neutral position in regard to Christ.* Can conscience be neutral on a clearly stated question of right and wrong? Can the heart be neutral in reference to a matter involving the most serious consequences to our interest and our happiness? Do not the pleadings of conscience on the one hand, and of appetite on the other, the conflicts of reason and passion, of truth and error, of holiness and sin, within our own breast, create an imperious necessity of taking sides one way or the other? The *outward* may admit of neutrality, but not the *inward*, not the contrary tendencies and issues of our own spiritual nature, arising from the introduction of Christ's word into our minds. "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."

XIV.

THE PLACE AND IMPORTANCE OF AN INDIVIDUAL.

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"But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you."—1 Cor. xii. 20, 21.

My remarks on this occasion will have a single object. They will be designed to impress upon my hearers a sense of personal obligation in the cause of religion; the obligation resting on us as individuals. In doing this, I shall endeavor to ascertain the place and the importance of the individual in the social organization, and particularly in the church:—"There are many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.' It will contribute to give order to the remarks which I propose to make, if I arrange them under the three following heads:—the erroneous views which prevail in regard to the place and the importance of the individual; the place which, according to the divine arrangements, he *necessarily* occupies in the social organization, and the place which he may *voluntarily* occupy in promoting the cause of religion.

I. First, the erroneous views which prevail in regard to the place and importance of the individual.

In regard to this, there are two quite opposite errors, though not equally bordering on virtue, or equally harmless.

1. The one which is most common, and the least virtuous, is that of *over-estimating* our importance, and consequently of being unwilling to occupy the place which we were designed to fill. It is unnecessary, I presume, to attempt to demonstrate the fact here adverted to, or to search out the causes of it. The error is the child of selfishness and pride; the effect of closing our eyes on the truth respecting ourselves; the result of always looking at one minute object, until it magnifies itself so as to occupy the whole field of vision. There are few persons who at some period of their lives are not seized with this overweening estimate of themselves;

there are many whom it accompanies all their lives, descending with them even to the mouth of the tomb. We think of our own consequence; our talents; our attainments. We think what a breach will be made when we die. We think of the mourners who will gather around us with broken hearts. We think of the solemn, sad procession that will go with us to the tomb:—forgetting how seldom it is that the hearts of any considerable proportion in a funeral procession are serious and solemn at all, or care anything about the dead. We look at our own affairs and press them forward, as if everything else should give way to them, and as if the world had no interests so great that they may not be required to yield to our convenience.

Now, how contrary all this is to truth and reality, it is hardly necessary to attempt to show. Few will care about it at all when we die; and the world at large will care nothing, and know nothing about it. A very little circle of friends will be affected—as a little circle of water is agitated when a drop of rain falls into the ocean. At the centre of that small circle of friends, there will be some deep emotion, and some tears of genuine grief will be shed; at a very little distance, the emotion will be fainter and feebler; at a point but a little more remote there will be none, and soon, very soon, all the agitation there was will have died away—as when the little drops of rain fall into the ocean—

> The gay will laugh
> When thou art gone, the solemn brood of care
> Plod on, and each one as before will share
> His favorite phantom.—BRYANT.

A few friends will go and bury us; and then they will turn away to their own concerns, forgetful that we are sleeping in the grave. Affection will rear a stone, and plant a few flowers over our grave —but the hand that reared the stone or planted the flowers will soon become unable to cut the letters deeper as they become obliterated, or to cultivate the flowers—and in a brief period the little hillock will be smoothed down, and the stone will fall, and neither friend nor stranger will be concerned to ask which one of the forgotten millions of the earth was buried there. No "old Mortality" will go to cut again those effaced words which told our name, and the time of our birth and of our death. Every vestige that we ever lived upon the earth will have vanished away. All the little memorials of our remembrance—the lock of hair enchased in gold, or the portrait that hung in our dwellings, will cease to have the slightest value to any living being, nor will even momentary curiosity be excited to know who wore that hair, or whose countenance is delineated there.

> On my grassy grave
> The men of future times will careless tread,
> And read my name upon the sculptured stone;
> Nor will the sound familiar to their ears,
> Recall my vanished memory.—H. KIRKE WHITE.

2. The other error is the opposite one—more rare but more virtuous, and more nearly bordering on truth—that of *undervaluing* our importance as individuals. In melancholy mood we look at the facts just adverted to. We think of the hundreds of millions that dwell on the earth, each one just as important in his own sphere as we are, and ask ourselves how many there are of these that *we* know, or care about; and then, by a natural transition, we ask pensively, how many of them know *us*, or care anything about us. We remember what countless hosts have lived, and played their parts, and are forgotten; and then we seize the glass of the astronomer and look out on other worlds and systems—when the imagination is lost in their immensity and their distance, and fancy them all peopled with as dense a population as our own, and come back with the impressive truth that all our earth compared with these worlds is literally less in proportion than a single grain of sand to all the sands which are spread along the shores of oceans, and with no mock modesty we ask, what are we? Of what importance are we amidst these multitudes; these worlds? What interests would suffer if we should be overlooked; who would weep if we should be forgotten forever? "What is man that Thou—the Maker of these worlds—art mindful of him?" Who, in these worlds, would know it if *I* should cease to be?

Looking out, then, on these opposite errors, it is of importance to understand our *real* place in the system of things where our Maker has placed us; the real work which is given us to do; the real bearing of what we do on the organization around us.

II. My second object, therefore, was to consider the place which the individual *necessarily* occupies in the social organization. Perhaps we shall find something, not inconsistent with the exercise of humility and modesty, which will inform our minds with a conviction of his importance.

We have an illustration of what I mean in the text, and in the other verses relating to the same subject, in the chapter from which the text is taken. The body is made up of many members or parts, each one of which in its place is necessary to the harmony and happiness of the whole, and no one of which can be spared without injury. "The eye cannot undertake to do the whole work allotted to the animal frame, and say to the hand, I have no need of thee; the head cannot undertake the entire functions, and say to the feet, I have no need of you." It may be indeed a question, which *is* the most valuable or useful, and which could be spared with the least disadvantage; but no member, however unimportant, is lost without our being made sensible, if we were never before, of its value. It is saying only what will occur to any one to remark, that the whole body is made up of all the individual members; that a nation is *but* the aggregate of individual citizens; that an army is made up of individual soldiers; that the "milky-way" in the heavens is made

up of individual stars; that the ocean is an accumulation of individual drops of water. Any one in itself may seem unimportant; and yet its value is to be estimated, not wholly or mainly by taking it out, and looking at it separately, and asking whether it would be missed by being withdrawn, but by the effect produced by all embraced—as we judge of the beauty and value of the eye, not by taking it out of its socket and placing it in a casket of gold, but where God has placed it in combination with the other members of the body.

The real importance of the individual is to be estimated by the greatness of the results of all in combination, and the place to *measure* his value is when we are measuring those combined and aggregate results. To see the *real* worth of the soldier, all look not at one private in the army, and ask what difference in such a host it would make if he were killed or should run away; but we look at the results of such a victory as that at Waterloo—the effect on kingdoms, and on the course of the world perhaps for ages, and divide that result by the numbers engaged, and make *that* the point where we estimate his value. To see the importance of the individual laborer in the coral reefs, we do not select one of the countless millions of the little workers, and place him beneath the microscope, but we look at the land that begins to lift its head above the floods, or the groups of islands that form the habitations of men; and, standing *there*, we form our estimate of the value of the individual laborers that have long since ceased their toils, and that never seemed to be worthy of notice.

It has cost many experiments, and has been the fruit of long study, to know the true worth and place of the individual in the world. At one time, he has seemed to be so unimportant, and there seemed to be such evils from his being associated with others, that it has been held to be the height of virtue to sever all connection with the living, and to carry out the idea of individuality and isolation, to the utmost possible extent. Antony in Egypt, and Benedict in Italy, types of this class of men, and fathers of the great and disastrous experiment, believed that virtue consisted in cutting the cords which bound them to the living world, and in separating themselves from the race. They withdrew to caves and solitude, and made it a virtue not to look on the face of man, and to take no part in the good or the evil of the world; in its social virtue, toils, sufferings, joys. There was to be no family for them; no church; no clan; no tribe; no country; nothing which was to bind them to any of the living. The idea of *individuality* was to be carried out to the utmost possible extent, without anything of alliance or combination; and the single virtue to be cherished was to be that, which we now deem to be the excuse of the most severe and solitary punishment of felons—*solitariness*. The whole monastic system, so fruitful of mischief everywhere, grew out of that conception; and all its inexpressible vices and follies have been the result of ignorance

of the proper place of the individual in the organization where God placed him. Gloomy and ascetic spirits there are in all ages; misanthropic, and disappointed, and disturbed minds; the dissocial, and the proud, and the indolent, and the soured, to whom the cell of the monk is the appropriate home; and it shows some knowledge of human nature, and gives some popularity and power to a system of religion, to open caves in the desert for such minds as that of Antony, or to build monasteries like those on Sinai and Lebanon, for the soured and the disappointed;—or, which is the same thing, to establish a nunnery to which the disappointed, and the superstitious, of the gentler sex may retire, where they may close all communication with a hated world; and where, before physical death has done its work, the body and the soul may be entombed. All this is because the true place of the individual was not known.

An opposite but equally dangerous thing is to combine individuals in unnatural and unholy alliances; in secret associations for evil, or public confederations of iniquity. Here the *power* of the individual is required; but he is allied with others for purposes which nature never contemplated, and where the organization must sooner or later infringe on some law of society. Here too man, dissatisfied with his Maker's arrangements, is always making experiments—as wide of the truth, and as disastrous in the end, as the scheme of the hermit, or the rules of the monastery. Now at New Harmony; now at Nauvoo; now at Niskequna and Lebanon; and now in the encampments of the Fourierites, the experiment is made over and over again, to see whether the individual cannot be disposed of in some better association than the Creator has designed, and whether some new organization may not be made up that shall be in morals what was sought in the laboratory of the alchymist—to find out some new combinations that should produce the elixir of life or the philosopher's stone.

God has grouped individuals in their natural relations as he thought best. He has left us free to form new combinations, *if these natural groupings are not rudely sundered*—but not otherwise; and he frowns on all combinations where they are *not* observed. If those natural groupings are not regarded; if the new disposing of the individual does not contemplate and recognize them, the new arrangement falls to pieces. The natural grouping of the parts of the human race, as God has arranged them, is into families; neighborhoods; tribes; nations. He *might* have peopled the world with independent individuals—bound together by no common sympathies, cheered by no common joys, impelled to effort by no common wants. All that is tender in parental and filial affection; all that is mild, bland, purifying in mutual love; all that is elevating in sympathetic sorrow and joy; all that is great and ennobling in the love of the species, might have been unknown. Isolated individuals, though surrounded by thousands, there might have been no cord to bind us to the living world, and we should

have wept alone, rejoiced alone, died alone. The sun might have shed his beams on us in our solitary rambles, and not a mortal have felt an interest in our bliss or woe. Each melancholy individual might have lived, as the hermit seeks to live, unbenefited by the existence of any other, and with no one to shed a tear on the bed of moss, when in despair he would lie down, and when he would die.

But this is not the way in which God has made the world. He has made the race one great brotherhood; and each one has some interest in the wildest barbarian that seeks a shelter beneath the rock, or that finds a home in a cave. This great common brotherhood he has broken up into communities of nations, tribes, clans, families—each with its own set of sympathies, with peculiar interests, with peculiar sorrows and joys.

In these organizations the individual is *never* overlooked or forgotten. He is an essential part, and there is not a feeling or law of his nature which is not consulted or regarded. He can play his individual part in his place; act out his nature; develop his talents; and you can form any new combination for good in entire consistency with these laws. The individual is never lost sight of, and yet his *power* is greatly increased by the combination. The *father* is an individual, and yet it is never lost sight of that he *is* a father, and not a man occupying a place which any other man might occupy; the mother is an individual, and yet she is recognized *as* a mother, and not merely a *woman* whose place could be as well filled by another; the brother, the sister, the child, the neighbor, the patriarch, the patriot, is an individual, and fills his place *as* such, and yet no small part of the influence which he wields grows out of the place which he occupies.

See now, for one moment, what may be done in accordance with these laws, or what may grow out of these laws for the good of the whole.

There is, first, the widest play for individual genius and talent. The name of each one of the workmen of St. Peter's, as well as the name of Michael Angelo, might have been preserved; the labor of each stone-cutter, and carver, and gilder was needful; and the glory of the whole is the result of the combined skill of all. The fame of Newton is his own, and ever will be; but the world shares the glory and the benefit of the principle. The genius of Milton as an individual had ample play, and his fame is his own; though the happiness of millions has been promoted by the Paradise Lost. It was a toiling *individual* that wrought all this. So all that there is in our literature, and arts, and sciences, is the result of the labor of individuals—individuals not exactly like the builders of the honey-comb, or the coral reefs, that are produced by unvarying and unconscious instinct; individuals not like the builders of the pyramids, or the soldiers in a disciplined army—positions which nature never contemplated, where there is little more of genius, or freedom, or independent thinking than there is in the labor of the bee or the

beaver: but individuals exulting in the consciousness of freedom; indulging in their own plans, and fired with their own aspirations; fettered by no improper restraints; walking in the light which their own genius has kindled, and yet in their freedom contributing to all that is noble, and grand, and progressive in society.

There is, secondly, in accordance with these laws, and under these arrangements, the utmost made that is possible of the labors of the individual. He accomplishes most, and works to best advantage, when he is in his own sphere as God has placed and designed him. In the days of Nehemiah, when they built the walls of the city, the work went on and was completed, because every one "repaired over against his own house," and "over against his chamber," Neh. iii. 28, 30. In an army, the battle is secured not by fighting in disorder, or by forming new combinations, at the pleasure of the soldiers, but because each man contends in his appropriate place. The result, whatever glory there may be, is always the effect of the labors of individuals in their own places, and according to the measure of their talents and skill. Look over our country. It is studded over with cities, and towns, and villages, and smiling fields of harvest. It is penetrated with turnpikes, and railroads, and canals. Its lakes and rivers are covered with steamboats, and with the evidences of an extended commerce. Its great rivers are crossed on bridges; their falls are ascended by locks; their obstructed channels are cleared out; their shallow places are deepened. The sound of the loom and the mill is everywhere heard in the land. Once all this was an unbroken forest; no cities or towns were here; there were no railroads, bridges, or canals; no vessel, save the bark canoe, had ever pressed the bosoms of these lakes and streams. What we see now is the result of innumerable indiviaual blows of the axeman in levelling the forests; of the labors of innumerable masons and carpenters in building our cities; of innumerable diggers of our canals; of great multitudes of farmers cultivating their own lands, as if there were but *one* farm on the earth to be ploughed, and fenced, and sown. The looms and spindles of the land are individual things, and there are individual minds that attend to them. All this aggregate of beauty and of wealth exists because there are an innumerable number of operatives, each minding his own business, and each, perhaps unconsciously, contributing to the beauty of the whole—as the individual rose on the prairie contributes its own part to the beauty of the whole.

Under these arrangements, and by these laws, there is a third thing which demands a somewhat more extended illustration. It is, that while the individual *necessarily* occupies this important place in society according to the arrangements of our Maker, there is a field left for *voluntary combination of all sorts for good.* This leads me directly to the

III. Third point, which I proposed to consider—the place which

the individual may *voluntarily* occupy in promoting the cause of religion. A good man in the sphere in which Providence places him, should he never make any voluntary effort to go out of that sphere, cannot but do good, for there is an unconscious and undesigned influence in favor of virtue which every such man exerts, and which is of inestimable value to the cause of truth. The world could not do without this, and no good man can *possibly* live in vain, unless he withdraws himself to a cave or a dungeon. A consistent Christian father, mother, son, brother, merchant, neighbor, lawyer, farmer, cannot but do good by an example of virtue and piety, and by the discharge of the duties to which these natural relations give rise; though he may not be doing all the good which he might do if he would combine his influence more with others. For, there is a higher and more decisive good of a voluntary kind which can be done without disregarding any of these relations, or impairing at all this involuntary influence on the world. In the course of thought pursued thus far in this discourse, I have considered the former of these influences; I shall now proceed, in what remains of the discourse, to illustrate the latter—the place which the individual may *voluntarily* occupy in promoting the cause of religion. I refer now particularly to Christians; and in illustrating this part of my subject, it will be natural to notice the slight sense of personal obligation felt in general by professed Christians; and then to consider the place which the individual Christian may and should voluntarily occupy.

1. First, the slight sense of personal obligation among Christians. I mean by this, that there are large numbers in the Christian churches who have only the feeblest conviction, if they have any, of obligation to make direct personal efforts to promote the common cause; and that the responsibility of maintaining and carrying forward religion in the world in the more direct, and self-denying, and voluntary efforts, is devolved on others. A few brief illustrations here will show what I particularly wish to get before your minds. First, there is a feeling that the ministers of the gospel should be peculiarly holy, and self-denying, and dead to the world—dead to its pleasures, its gains, its ambition, far more than others. And yet, will any one point me to a place in the New Testament which requires ministers of the gospel to be more devoted to the work of their Master than other Christians; or to any precept or permission which would make that to be right in you which is wrong in us? Second, there is a prevalent feeling that the missionary to the heathen should be more deeply imbued with the spirit of the Lord Jesus, and with the principles of voluntary benevolence, than other men; that he should be more willing to take up his cross, and to traverse pathless sands, or go through driving snows to do good; that he, with almost no advantages for the cultivation of the graces of the spirit in a heathen land—a land without Sabbaths and sanctuaries, and Christian fellowship—should be more holy than we

who in a Christian land enjoy in rich abundance all the means of grace. But will any one point to the place in the New Testament which shows that there is to be one standard of holiness and self-denial for him; another for you and me? Third, there is a feeling connected with that just adverted to, that private members of the church may do that which it would be highly inconsistent and improper for ministers of the gospel to do; that they may train up their families in a different manner; that they may engage in other forms of amusement; and that they may cherish and manifest a spirit of worldliness which would be wholly improper in their Christian pastor. But where in the New Testament will any statement be found which, in regard to amusement, and conversation, and general manner of life, makes a distinction between a pastor and any of the members of his flock? Fourth, there is a feeble sense, on the great body of professed Christians, of personal responsibility in regard to the institutions and duties of religion. I allude to the slight impression among many private members of the church, that any portion of the responsibility rests on them, or that they have anything more to do than to render the most general countenance in favor of religion. How few are they in any church who feel the responsibility of laboring for the conversion of sinners, as a specific thing to be done! How few are they who feel any responsibility for keeping up meetings for social prayer! How few are they, who among those who are well qualified, who feel under obligation to engage in sabbath school instruction. How few are they, and even among those who will not refuse to contribute to the object *when applied* to, who feel under personal obligation to *originate* any movement for the promotion of the objects of Christian benevolence, or to be the well-known and efficient patrons of the institutions which contemplate the conversion of the world! On the minds of the few these obligations are deeply, and permanently felt; on the mass even of professed Christians, it is feared, they are not felt; by the mass certainly they are not regarded.

2. I will proceed, then, to show the place which the individual Christian may occupy, and should occupy in the promotion of the cause of religion. The statement must be a brief one.

First, every professing Christian, with whatever denomination he may be connected, bears a portion of the honor and the responsibility of religion in the world. He is a part of that total church which the Saviour came to redeem, and which is declared by him to be "the light of the world, and the salt of the earth," and to which he has issued the commandment to "preach the gospel to every creature." Whatever there is of honor, of purity, of truth, of respectability, in that church, is in part intrusted to his hands—as to each freeman in a republic is committed a portion of the honor of his country; to each soldier in an army a portion of the honor *of her flag*. When he became a member of that church, by the *very nature* of the transaction, a portion of its honor was intrusted

to him; and by the same transaction he assumed a portion of its responsibility. In his profession of religion, he identified himself with the Lord Jesus, and with his cause. He left the community of the "world," and united himself with the fraternity of Christians. He abandoned, of choice, the associations where amusement, and wealth, and vanity, and pleasure are all that is sought, for that community where religion is primary, and where men bind themselves to live unto God. He left the abodes of sensuality and of song; came out of the halls where are music and dancing; forsook the "tents of wickedness," and voluntarily entered the temple over whose doors is inscribed "holiness to the Lord," and became a dweller in that city—the holy city of Zion—whose "walls are salvation, and whose gates are praise." I say, he did it of choice. No man forced him to do it. Nor father, nor mother, nor pastor, nor friend, nor foe, compelled him to become a member of the Christian church. It was among the most free acts of his life, in many instances among the most deliberate and carefully weighed. In many cases it was the result of warm gushing emotion; in all it was the result of choice, when he came and pledged himself over the sacred emblems of the body and blood of Christ to lead a holy life. Now, into such a community, what right has any one to bring a worldly spirit? Why should any one voluntarily enter into such an association only to live to himself? What right has he to withdraw from his brethren; to spread around him the maxims and feelings which pertain to the world; to refuse to co-operate with those who are endeavoring to maintain the common cause? How can he forgot, moreover, that there is always a part of the world which will form their idea of the nature of religion from the conduct of the private members of the church? They form it not from the Bible; for many never read the Bible. They form it not from what is stated in the pulpit; for many never enter the sanctuary, and if they do, they say that religion is not what is taught, but what it is seen to be in the lives of its friends. They form it not wholly from the lives of the ministers of the gospel, for they say that preachers are professionally holy, and that it is their business to be religious; and perhaps they may charitably add that they are paid for it, and that their very living depends on it. They form not their views of religion from the lives and deaths of the martyrs. Many of these have never heard the names of the martyrs, and the world cares little how Ignatius and Cranmer felt at the stake. But they form their impressions of the nature of religion from the lives of the individual members of the church—their honesty, and integrity, and fidelity; their temper, and their consistent zeal in that noble cause which they have voluntarily embraced, and judge of religion by what they see there.

Second. Every Christian has facilities for doing something in the cause of the Redeemer which no other one has, and his individual influence and talent is demanded in that cause. A father has an

influence over the little circle where he presides, which no other man can have; and that influence, if he is a Christian, belongs to Christ, and is that on which he much relies for the promotion of his cause in the world. A mother has an influence within that narrow but sacred enclosure, which is as valuable and controlling as it is interesting and tender. No artificial forms of society can create it elsewhere; no law, no fashion, no art. That too belongs to Christ. So the physician; so the teacher; so the magistrate; so the eloquent advocate; so he who has been trained in the schools of learning; so he who is endowed with eminent gifts by his Maker. There is an influence which each man possesses which is of value to the cause of virtue and religion; and that individual influence the Redeemer claims in its proper sphere as his, to be employed in the promotion of his cause in the world. On any one man, in proportion to his ability, the claim is as imperative as on another; and the fact that you have any peculiar facility for doing good imposes the obligation so to employ it. And the work which you are to do need not be that which amazes the world by the eloquence of a Massillon or a Whitfield; not that which lays the foundation of undying fame by the reasoning powers of an Edwards; not that which moves nations, and effects a sudden change in human affairs by such mighty efforts as those of Luther or Knox; not that which produces a new and enduring organization of men like the far-seeing sagacity and the piety of Wesley. It may be the noiseless and unobtrusive daily work of doing your duty in a family, of teaching a class of little children in a Sunday School, of visiting a cottage of poverty and want, of putting quietly a little tract into the hand of a neighbor or a stranger, of going to your closet and there unobserved by men pleading for the salvation of a world.

Third. Success in promoting religion in the world depends on personal and individual effort. There are no armies which secure a victory in the battle-field but such as are made up of individuals: there are no cities, towns, palaces, navies, or bulwarks of war but such as are the work of individuals. The victory of Nelson at Trafalgar depended, perhaps, more than on anything else, on the magic power of the watchword of the day, "England expects *every man* to do his duty." "All at work, and always at work," was the significant and characteristic motto of John Wesley; and to the principle which prompted this, under the divine blessing, can be traced the far-spread and happy results of the labors of the denomination of Christians of which he was the founder. In building the immense coral reefs of the South Seas, each insect assiduously labors while life lasts, and the vast work is done by individual effort. In our own land, these forests have been levelled, and these cities built, and these canals and railroads made, and these farms have opened their bosoms to the sun and rain, and these gardens make the air fragrant, and these ships whiten every sea, be*cause an immense* population has been individually at work.

It is just so in religion. Salvation is an individual work; and destruction is an individual work. Satan plies his powers not on a community as an abstract thing, but on the individual, as if there were but one, and as if he had nothing else to do but to ruin that one soul. The man that becomes an infidel is an individual. The young female that is seduced from virtue is an individual. The young men that are made intemperate or licentious are individuals; and there is as definite and distinct a work in reference to each one as if he were the solitary dweller on earth. When the great tempter approached the bowers of Eden, he felt that if he was to be successful, he must approach the mother of mankind as an individual; he must find her alone. So the great poet sings:—

"He sought them both, but wished his hap might find
Eve separate; he wished, but not with hope
Of what so seldom chanced; when to his wish,
Beyond his hope, Eve separate he spies,
Veiled in a cloud of fragrance, where she stood,
Half spied, so thick the roses blushing round
About her glowed."

"——'Behold alone,' said he,
'The woman, opportune to all attempts,
Her husband, for I view far round, not nigh.
So spake the enemy of mankind, enclosed
In serpent, inmate bad! and toward Eve
Addressed his way." *Par. Lost*, B. ix.

And ever since, the work of destruction has been, and must be, a work on individual minds.

And so in the salvation of men. It is a work that pertains to individuals. Christ died for individuals; and each one who is brought to heaven is to be renewed, sanctified, guided, defended, as if he were alone. That child in your family is to be converted. That member of your Sunday school class is to be saved. That brother is to be renewed. That sister, daughter, wife, is to be brought to love the Saviour. These thousands and tens of thousands round about us, are individuals, and are to be saved *as such*. In each case it is an individual work. It is not a vague, intangible, unmeaning, and abstract generality. It is the work of saving individual sinners from the horrors of eternal despair; and each one is to be saved by the same anxiety, and effort, and prayer as if he were alone.

There is a fourth and final remark which I will make, in accordance with the views advanced in this discourse. It is this, that there is a large field of Christian effort, in which, without sacrificing any principle pertaining to you as an individual, you may co-operate with others in promoting the great end of all social organization. You labor on your own farm, or in your workshop, or in your own office or study, and promote your own welfare, and the good of your family. Yet, in entire consistency with your own

individual plans, you unite with your neighbors in building a bridge, or making a road for the public good; in erecting a school-house where your children may be educated together; or in building a church where you may worship God. You have your own views of poetry, architecture, and the arts. You have your own ways of tilling your ground, and your own theory about the succession of crops, and about the time of sowing your wheat. You build your barn and your apiary in your own way; and yet you can unite with your neighbor in promoting education, and temperance, and the love of peace—for then you meet on common ground. You are a Calvinist, and in your own place may maintain and enjoy your views of religion, and seek to promote them, and defend them when you are attacked in the best way you can. Another is an Arminian, and with equal freedom has a right to maintain his own principles, and make them the basis of his joys and hopes; but still, there are more vital points in which you agree than there are in which you differ; and you may stand up side by side in defending your common Christianity in opposition to all "Infidels, Jews, Greeks or Mohammedans;" in distributing the Bible, the charter of your common hopes; in maintaining everywhere the doctrine of human depravity; the fact of the atonement, and the necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and the duty of holy living. You are a Presbyterian, not from chance, and not because you deem your principles of no value, and not worth defending; and yet with Methodist, and Episcopal, and Baptist brethren, and with all "who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," you can see that there is common ground which you can take in regard to the government of God, and the atonement, and the character of man, and the nature of true religion, and the doctrines of future retribution. Here we may stand together, compromising no principles; affecting not our influence as individuals; but blending our power into one, as beams of light come out from the sun and mingle together, pouring the flood of day on these worlds—yet capable, if we choose to do it, of being divided by the prism into red, and orange, and yellow, and green, and blue, and indigo, and violet, and all made up in fact of such rays; or as many little individual rivulets hasten down from the mountains to form the mighty river as it rolls on to the ocean.

DEATH AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH.

BY REV. ISAAC HEADLEY.

EVERY shadow has a substance, and every substance a shadow, when light is reflected upon it. There is death, and there is the shadow of death, when that light which Christ has shed on the tomb is reflected upon it. "It is appointed unto all men once to die." And there never have been but two exceptions among all the countless millions of former generations; and we have no reason to believe there will ever be another, until the resurrection morn, when the bodies of those who are alive will experience a change equivalent to death.

To the impenitent dying is a double death; for all their hopes and expectations die and perish with them, and they sink down into all the horrors of the second death. It is a fearful thing for a person and his hopes to expire together. To such, death is indeed the *king of terrors*.

But not so with dying believers; though they too must pass through the valley, yet faith enables them to do it without fear or dismay, for it is only the *shadow* of death through which they pass into their long-desired and wished-for home, and rest with their God and Saviour in heaven; hence they can say with the Psalmist, "Though I walk through the valley and shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Although the Christian knows he must die; must put off this earthly tabernacle before he can enter heaven; must have a conflict with death; and although he knows he must fall in the conflict, yet faith assures him though he falls he will conquer—will gain the victory, through the Captain of his salvation, who has won it for him; he can therefore by anticipation shout the triumph even before he engages in the conflict, "O death, where is thy sting; O grave, where is thy victory?" As the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; and as Christ has become the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth; hence he has disarmed sin of its power, and death of its sting.

To real Christians death has, as it were, changed his form, yea, even lost his substance, and nothing of him is left but his shadow; sleep, merely the image of death. It is death, not the Christian that dies. He just begins to live; he falls asleep in Jesus, and his soul

awakes in immortal life, glory and blessedness, where death can never enter or have any more dominion over him forever. Death is not only a conquered enemy, but he is also transmuted into a friend. "Death is yours," saith the apostle; yours to deliver you from all sin, sorrow, and suffering; yours to introduce you into the presence of your God and Saviour, and into all the pure and holy joys and felicities of heaven.

Who would not wish to die the death of the righteous, and have their last end like his? And whose inmost soul does not shudder at the thought of dying the death of the wicked, and have his last end and final portion like theirs? What cause have we to thank God for giving to feeble, dying mortals, such a victory over the monster death, as to enable them to contemplate the closing scene of life not only with composure, but with pleasing anticipation, "having a desire to depart and be with Christ." And many others, "who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage," yet when the time of their departure drew near, and they were about to step down into the lone valley, have found death so disarmed of his sting, and disrobed of his terror, that they could, while passing through his *shadow*, triumphantly sing—

"Lord, lend your wings, I mount! I fly!
O grave! where is thy victory!
O death! where is thy sting!"

O what a debt of love, gratitude and praise do we owe the ever-blessed Saviour, who has purchased all this for us by his own sufferings and death; he encountered and conquered death in his most horrid forms, that he might give his faithful followers an easy and triumphant victory over him.—*N. Y. Evangelist.*

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SERMON XV.

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THE WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE.*

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh; (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."—2 Cor. x. 3-5.

In the "lively oracles," both earlier and later, "the knowledge of God" denotes or implies true religion. As used by the apostles, it is but another expression for the gospel, or "the truth as in Jesus." Evidence of this we have in the text, and in many other passages of the New Testament.

"The knowledge of God," important as it is to the welfare of man, both in this life and the future, has never had free course. "The carnal mind," because of its "enmity against God," has desperately resisted "the grace that bringeth salvation, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." With a very obvious, if not also a peculiarly impressive significance, in the times of Paul, the self-denying and perilous exertions and exposures of himself and other followers of Christ were represented as a "warfare,"—themselves, as "soldiers,"—their means of operation and defence as "swords" and "helmets,"—and even the "Prince of Peace,"—their Leader and Lord—as the "Captain of Salvation."

What the apostle intended by "strongholds" is partially intimated by what he says of "imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God." There can be no doubt, that he comprehends in this description all the vain speculations, conceits, devices, and pretenses of self-righteousness, self-sufficiency, and self-delusion; in short, everything which can be arraigned in opposition to "the truth of God and the faith of Jesus."

And how did he and his associates prosecute their "warfare" against "spiritual wickedness?" Although "in the flesh," and therefore subject to many and great infirmities and temptations, they did not strive to obtain their "incorruptible crown," or to accom-

* Preached before the Massachusetts Pastoral Association, at Boston, May 28, 1850.

plish any of their purposes, by means of instrumentalities, which are congenial to selfishness and ungodliness. "For," as he affirms, "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal." It is evident, that he means as if he had said,—we attempt no coercion or violence. No fraud, no self-aggrandizement, no corruption of the word of God, can be laid to our charge. We may indeed invoke miraculous judgments in vindication of our despoiled authority. But we much prefer to "beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ," and to speak with far less of assurance, than would become us, of the "authority which the Lord hath given for EDIFICATION, and not for DESTRUCTION."

Laying aside the metaphors of the text, I propose to specify and illustrate the principal means, by which the great apostle so successfully labored to promote the gospel of the grace of God; and by which he became so pre-eminently a model for the "ministry of reconciliation" among all people throughout all ages,—until the last message of redeeming love shall be delivered in the name of Jesus.

I. The apostle labored to promote the gospel, by publishing it as a definite and distinctive system of faith and practice.

As in the material, so in the moral world, when "God said, Let there be light, there was light, and God divided the light from the darkness." "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" shone into the heart of Saul of Tarsus. The doctrine of Christ and him crucified, like Christ himself, was to him no longer "without form or comeliness." He saw in clearness and resplendence the amazing "mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,"—the way of salvation by a sincere, penitential faith in the blood of the cross. It was not an airy, misty, shadowy, undefined, and undefinable something or somewhat; but it it was "the word of life," which could be "seen," be "looked upon," and be "handled."

When, therefore, Paul went out to preach to his fellow-men, he carried with him a FORM OF DOCTRINE, which he could publish and "deliver," as such, to all who became the disciples of his Master. It was a "form of sound words," which the faithful could "hold fast" unto death. It was "truth," and THE truth, in a reality and with a blessedness, of which he had sure and most ennobling experience. In all things he thus had an incalculable advantage, in encountering the philosophy of the schools, and vulgar superstition, whether associated with the bewildering traditions of the Jew, or the debasing mythologies of the Gentile. He could edify or build up, as well as demolish and destroy.

His faith did not not consist in "NOT believing." His creed was neither a summary of negatives, nor of disclaimers. He could announce to all men everywhere, as "a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;" for the LIVING GOD, who made heaven and earth, "gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." In few words he could answer the question, "What must I do to be saved?" Or he could discuss

the great doctrines of justification by faith, and of atonement, in elaborate treatises, as in the epistles to the Romans and the Hebrews. In either he had something positive, substantial, real, visible, and tangible. He was neither a pantheist, nor a mystic, a transcendentalist nor an enthusiast.

2. It may next be remarked, that Paul labored to promote the gospel, by publishing it as indispensable to salvation, and as freely offered to all.

It made no difference whether he was addressing Jews or Greeks, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free. He "preached Christ" to all, as the only Saviour from "the wrath to come." No one, however, could better have known the first impressions of the story of the cross,—especially upon minds of the higher cast, both in activity and attainment. The intellectual habits, and the moral associations of those in the great cities of wealth, learning, luxury, and pride, in which most of all the apostles preached,—gave them ideas of dogmatical and irresponsible self-consequence, and predisposed them in large masses to repel with ineffable scorn the uncompromising and humbling claims of Christ and him crucified. Yet in all places and among all people, without the least respect of persons, he proclaimed the "Gospel of Christ as the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, THEN WERE ALL DEAD! Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. . . . . God hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

He knew, that "of God Christ Jesus is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,—that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." He knew and felt most deeply, that "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them believe." And hence it was, that, while willing to be himself accursed from Christ for his brethren, his kinsman according to the flesh, he laid to their charge as the sin above all their sins, that of "forbidding" him "to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved."

As a "Hebrew of the Hebrews," he had himself sought righteousness and heaven by the deeds of the law. His eyes had been shut, and had then been opened to see, that no man on earth was ever so justified and saved. Ruined and helpless—as a man weltering in his own heart's blood,—Jesus Christ was revealed to him, as "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Such now was the transformation of his views and feelings, such the inward and transporting witness of the remedial efficacy of the doctrine of Christ and him crucified, that he was as sure as of his being, that whosoever believeth hath eternal life, beyond all possibility of disappointment and shame. The great problem of "glory

and virtue" had been solved by the revelation of the Son of God; and not a shadow of a doubt remained, that, by faith in his name, the regenerated soul would have the victory over death and hell, and be crowned with spotless and immortal righteousness. And although at Antioch, in Pisidia, he could not refrain from "shaking off the dust of his feet," as a solemn and awful testimony in the name of Christ, against the "despisers," who "beheld" to "wonder and perish;" yet did he stand forth before all the world, as himself the "chief of sinners," and a "pattern" for the effectual persuasion of all the anxious and the agonized, on account of sin and the second death, that, not for a moment might they despair of pardon and life, if they would but remember the abounding mercy of the Lord Jesus to him, who was before "a blasphemer and a persecutor."

3. Paul labored to promote the gospel, it may further be remarked, by publishing it in simplicity.

Having "neither received it of man, nor was taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ," he preached it as he also received it. He had no improvements to make upon Jesus Christ. He discarded all the philosophy of the world, as "vain," because foolishness with God." The truths of Christianity he cordially embraced AS FACTS, in regard to which he was not authorized to raise "doubtful disputations," any more than "foolish questions." All admixtures of mere reason or imagination he vigilantly shunned, although the chief of the apostles, and accomplished in all the learning of his age.

Capable of efforts of oratory, which were not unnoticed by Longinus, in his illustrations of the sublime, and in connection with such names as Demosthenes, it must have been sheer malice or nothing better, which prompted some of the Corinthians to say of him, that "his bodily presence was weak and his speech contemptible." But well aware of the taste of that ancient Paris, the city of Corinth, and of the fascination of rhetorical brilliancies of expression and factitious accomplishments of delivery, he there appears to have been more than ever solicitious to keep himself behind the cross, and to commend the simple, the pure, and undefiled doctrine of Christ to every man's conscience. Yet he could never have had a greater temptation to avail himself of what was accounted "excellency of speech," or the "enticing words of man's wisdom."

It may occur to you, however, and should not be forgotten here, that in no epistles of Paul is there so much of genuine classic perfection of style, as in those to the Corinthians. That fifteenth chapter of his first Epistle is unsurpassed in every quality of chaste and terse, elegant and energetic, beautiful and sublime composition. Still you cannot fail to perceive, that, in all his matter and in all his manner of discourse, he betrays no ambition or desire to be praised and honored by the ungodly, whether learned or illiterate, noble or ignoble; but was ever aiming with most unfeigned solicitude to win souls to Christ, that CHRIST might have all the glory.

In the providence of God, the language of Greece—the richest of

all languages of the heathen world, and that most extensively spoken in the Roman empire, at the time of "the beginning of the gospel"—was made the repository and the vehicle of the message of the Redeemer's love to uncounted millions. But even the peerless language of Homer and Plato, of Herodotus and Euripides, was inadequate, without much "private interpretation," to express every "truth as in Jesus," in its various forms and connections, so that there should be no mode or degree of unintelligibleness or obscurity. Hence Peter had occasion to say, that there were "some things hard to be understood" in the epistles of his "beloved brother Paul;"—whether or not his "beloved brother Paul" might have indulged in a similar fraternal criticism upon his own.

But whatever there may be in the style of Paul, which may have obscured his meaning, at the time of his personal ministration, and which cannot now be fully elucidated, we may be very certain, that the difficulty could never have arisen from an affection of originality, or of depth of thought, or from any artistic structure or embellishment. We may concede, that parts of his epistles are quite dark, if not impenetrable; yet, as compared with the whole, they are like the solar spots, and would, perhaps, entirely disappear, if it were not for the dark places in the hearts and in "the eyes" of the "understanding," not only of believers generally, but also of the very best Christian expositors. So clear, so effulgent are the cardinal principles and the essential doctrines which he taught, that our Sabbath School children may understand them, and be "wise unto salvation." No one who heard Paul preach, or read what he wrote, need to have "perished for lack of knowledge." On the contrary, "leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ," he might "go on to perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of the laying on of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."

4. Another means by which Paul labored to promote the gospel, was that of publishing it in godly sincerity.

He really believed what he preached. His whole manner of preaching and of living was a demonstration of the genuineness, the cordiality of his personal faith in the doctrine of Christ. He "bore in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus," and so lived unto his Saviour and Lord, that he was dead unto the world. No selfish or secular end whatever could have furnished him the slightest motive to do or to suffer what he did, in publishing the word of salvation. He could thus appeal to his "manner of life," as a decisive witness of his godly sincerity.

"Our rejoicing is this," he says to the Corinthians, "the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward. For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge even unto the end. . . . Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty; not walking in craftiness nor hand-

ling the word of God deceitfully." "I have coveted no man's silver or gold, or apparel,"—said he to the elders of Ephesus. "And ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered to my necessities, and to them that were with me." To the Thessalonians he wrote,—"Our exhortation was not from deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile. But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness: God is witness. Nor from men sought we glory, neither from you, neither from others. . . . . Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you that believed; and how we exhorted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you to his kingdom and glory."

The peculiar impressiveness of this appeal may be lost upon those, who should happen to forget or fail to be reminded, that many have a character of excellence IN PUBLIC, which belongs not to their private walks, and is unknown among the observers of their daily life. He who could say,—"I have WRONGED no man, I have CORRUPTED no man, I have DEFRAUDED no man,"—ye are witnesses and God also how holily and justly and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you that believe," must have been a man who, amidst the abounding corruptions and impurities of the times, would have endured the scrutiny of fire upon fire. And this character of untarnished righteousness, of incorruptible honesty and sincerity, must have imparted, to all his preaching of the gospel of the Holy One and the Just, a power and a charm of conviction and persuasion, which neither Socrates, nor Tully, nor Quinctilian, could have ever imagined in all their grandest conceptions of the moral worth of "the good man"—irreproachable purity of life,—as the crowning perfection of consummate oratory.

5. The EARNESTNESS of Paul was another means, by which he labored so effectively in promoting the gospel.

I cannot here withhold a reference to a fact of unwritten biography, which the subject in this view very forcibly recalls to my mind. While pursuing my studies at the neighboring University, there was a fellow student from one of the opulent families of the South. For some months, he was reported to be in a state of partial derangement, and was at length obliged to leave his class. Whatever instructions he may have received in childhood, it afterwards appeared from very unexpected disclosures of his history, that he was almost an entire stanger to the Scriptures. Before leavieg his class, and while much depressed in spirits—craving relief he knew not what—he one day took up a Bible, or his Greek Testament. He soon found himself attracted and absorbed by the "Acts of the Apostles," in which Luke has so graphically described the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, and narrated the more important events and incidents of his subsequent career. He became intensely

interested in the character of Paul, AS A CHARACTER. The more he read of him, the more his admiration increased. And if I do not greatly err in memory, it was THE EARNESTNESS of Paul, more than any other characteristic, which deeply affected his heart, and was blessed of God to his ultimate conversion. In all his life, as he thought, he had never found a man with a SOUL like that of Paul; so EARNESTLY devoted to his God, and to the work of spreading the knowledge of salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ.*

And is it strange that he should have been so affected? Who can now read of Paul in those delineations of his fellow-laborer, and in his own writings, without seeing that he was indeed in earnest, like a man, who felt to the very utmost power of emotion, and not seldom to agony, that to those who perished, he was a savor of death unto death; but to those that were saved, of life unto life! Neither the "love that passeth knowledge," nor "the terrors of the Lord" could ever languish sleepily upon his tongue! In earnest he always was: and sometimes, as before Felix, "terribly in earnest."

His mode of reasoning very strikingly displays this element of character and of power. Let him take any point to argue, and however systematic may be his plan, or important the regularity of the succession of his positions or facts, he proceeds but a little way, before he seems to forget that he is reasoning, and breaks out in some burst of glowing exclamation or appeal. His reasoning is always "logic set on fire,"—and fire so powerful as to threaten to burn off the very strongest links of the chain of the argument.

But in all his earnestness, you see no proof of mere animal excitement, or of extravagance and enthusiasm. It was emotion, inspired legitimately by the realities of the great and the glorious theme, which enkindled and exalted his soul. And hence, we cannot doubt, that it was with an overwhelming moral dignity and grandeur, that he replied to Festus—"I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness!"

6. The BOLDNESS of Paul may next be specified, as a means by which he endeavored to promote the gospel.

Hardly had the scales fallen from his eyes at Damascus, after "the heavenly vision," before he "entered the synagogues," and "preached Christ that HE IS THE SON OF GOD. All that heard him were amazed, and said, "Is not this he that destroyed them, which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?" When subsequently he went to Jerusalem, "Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord on the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was with them coming in and going out of Jerusalem. And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians; but they went about to slay him."

* It would not be proper to say more. The facts were not known, until after the student had left Cambridge; and it is doubtful whether any officers of the University were ever aware of what the writer has here ventured to record.

As he began, so he continued. Surely he was not unapprised of the scorn, and the obloquy, the scourgings, imprisonments, and deaths, which everywhere threatened the heralds of the cross of Calvary. Beside the vivid suggestions of his own experience, while "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord,"—suggestions which would be sufficient to dishearten any man who had not the fortitude and courage of the noblest in the army of the martyrs—we find, that, at the very outset of his ministry for Christ, he received a revelation of suffering, no less than of salvation. While Ananias was hesitating to perform the service to which a vision directed him—thinking it impossible, that Saul of Tarsus had become a man of prayer in spirit and in truth—"Go thy way," said the Lord: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."

It was then in full view of all his liabilities to reproach, and ignominy, and torture, and frightful martyrdom, that he went through all the populous cities, the marts of commerce, and the seats of opulence and learning—preaching boldly the gospel of the kingdom of the Son of God. If men of the highest rank ridiculed his doctrine, and scoffed at his warnings, they could never have raised a blush upon his cheek. He could say to all, I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL. He could "weep in secret places for their pride," like the prophet of Lamentations; but no reproach or reviling could have ever caused him to appear "with confusion of face." Never did he flee for his life, or hide himself, because he feared death in any of its terrors; for he was always "ready, not to be bound only, but also to die for the name of the Lord Jesus."

Beyond a question, his appeal to those elders of Ephesus was applicable to all, whom he had been permitted to address according to his heart's desire. "I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God." He neither disguised the truth, nor withheld any truth, nor neutralized the truth, that he might make his doctrine more agreeable to the depraved taste of the carnal mind. In the conclusion of his Epistle to the Church of Ephesus—written when he was in chains—is the memorable exhortation, to "put on the whole armor of God, that he might be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, . . . Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints, and for me," it is added, "that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel; for which I am an ambassador in bonds that therein I may speak boldly as I ought to speak."

7. If Paul was distinguished for BOLDNESS, he was no less remarkable for the MEEKNESS and HUMILITY, with which also he labored to promote the gospel.

Fierce as he was, before he became a new man, he was so transformed into the image of Christ, that it might be said of him most

truly, that he was "meek and lowly in heart." He could suffer injuries without any desire of revenge; and whatever trials might come upon him, it was all well, if the power of Christ was present with him for his strength of consolation. The remembrance of what he once was, while a destroyer of the faith, and the consciousness of the unspeakable mercy which had been bestowed upon him, disarmed him of all asperity, and subdued all his haughtiness. This we are fully warranted to believe, from his words and his example. Still it was true, that he insisted firmly and indomitably upon a recognition of his rights, as a Roman citizen, and withstood even Simon Peter to the face, when he was justly "to be blamed."

Far and wide did Paul preach the gospel, with signal and signalized success. Yet he never speaks of his distinction in this respect, as if disposed to bring himself into notice. Upon one occasion he said,—"I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles." It was when compelled for the honor of Christ to vindicate himself against the outrageous aspersions of those, who craftily and shamelessly endeavored to undermine and destroy his influence in a church, for which he had toiled with such self-sacrificing endurance. The same remark will apply to other expressions of a similar nature. Vastly more congenial was the language of his first Epistle to that church: "Last of all Christ was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, and am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

How admirable the wisdom and the spirit of his charge to Timothy! "O man of God, follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, MEEKNESS. . . . Foolish and unlearned questions [questions indicating both ignorance and folly] avoid, knowing that they gender contentions. And the servant of the Lord must not contend; but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient,—in MEEKNESS instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth."

"Be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another," was an injunction to the Romans. To the Colossians also, and to the kindred in Christ generally, he wrote in the style of commandment or exhortation enforcing the obligations of humility and meekness, upon all classes and orders in the household of faith,—as if these graces of the Christian character were of immeasurable importance. And never could he have written as he did to those who had known him so well, if they had not indubitable evidence, that every word was true when he said: "Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer; being defamed, we entreat; we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things."

8. We have another and a most important view of the means by which Paul labored to promote the gospel when we consider that he always published it, as being made effectual in no other way, than by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Not the slightest hope of success would the apostle have had, were it not that his "speech was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." In every variety of manner, he proclaimed as his joy and exultation, that all the glory of the triumphs and the trophies of the gospel belonged to his Saviour and his God. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." He never speaks or writes of his success in publishing the glad tidings of salvation by the blood of Christ, but as accomplished by the "Lord working with him," or as if his unworthy instrumentality would have availed nothing, and less than nothing, if the word preached had not been "mighty through God." How he rebuked the Corinthians and glorified God, when he said:—"Whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord Jesus gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but GOD THAT GIVETH THE INCREASE."

9. I add, briefly, that Paul published the gospel as being made effectual in answer to fervent prayer.

From the moment he became convicted of sin, and was enlightened into a knowledge of Christ, he was a man of prayer,—earnest, energetic, effectual prayer. "What wilt thou have me do?" was his first petition, and we know not but his last. Certain it is, that from the time his Lord could say of him, "behold he prayeth,"—up to the latest hour of record, we have ample proof that, in enjoining upon the Thessalonians and other Christians, to "pray without ceasing." he enjoined what he himself most sacredly performed.

I know not in how many instances he uses such language as,—"Without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers." And to what end? "We pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power; that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ." Again he says to the Thessalonians, "Brethren, PRAY FOR US." How he exhorted the Ephesians "to pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, that utterance might be given" to him, for a bold and faithful proclamation of "the mystery of the gospel,"—may here be instructively called to memory, in connection with his words to the Colossians. "Continue in prayer and watch unto the same with thanksgiving. At the same time also praying for us, that God would open to us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery

of Christ, for which I am also in bonds. That I may make it manifest as I ought to speak."

10. I will notice but one other means, by which Paul labored to promote the gospel. It has been repeatedly implied. He spoke the truth in love.

Love to God, to Christ, to the brethren, and to sinners, was, beyond all dispute, the predominant, and all-controlling passion of the great apostle to the Gentiles. It glows in every sermon. It beams with celestial brightness in every epistle. I should be glad, if the time permitted, to illustrate each of the modes or elements of the love in the constant exercise of which Paul preached and exemplified "the faith once delivered to the saints." But I will only refer to the "charity," which he has so inimitably portrayed in the 13th chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians. That chapter was written, it must be borne in mind, when he was in those circumstances of most unreasonable, aggravated, cruel provocation! And where in all the writings of the apostles, is there one chapter more beautiful and tender, in sentiment, feeling, and expression?

When the apostle thus wrote of the "charity" that "suffereth long and is kind. . . . Seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil. . . . Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things; can it be doubted by any one among us, that they who had seen the most of the real spirit and the true life of Paul, would at once recognize his own moral likeness? It was because of his own charity," that he could say of his course among the Thessalonians,—"We were gentle among you even as a nurse cherisheth her children; so being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because you were dear unto us." In the same spirit it was, that at Ephesus, "by the space of three years" he ceased not to warn every man day and night with tears." But even this deeply affecting record is far from doing full justice to him, who could testify of himself, in the Epistle to the Romans:—"I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart; for I could wish myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

It is not strange, then, that a man of such spirit should have been so distinguished for his courtesy and urbanity, in his treatment of men of all ranks and conditions; and that he "became all things to all men," consistently with truth and faithfulness,—"that by all means he might save some." In this connection, however, some may call to mind certain examples of denunciation of opposers of the truth. They must not forget that the apostle refers to the conduct of subtle and malignant, mischievous and incorrigible enemies of all righteousness. And an anathema from one inspired of the Holy Ghost, is no more repugnant to the spirit of love unfeigned, than divine justice is irreconcilable with divine benevolence. Our Lord Jesus denounced the most dreadful woes upon the Scribes

and Pharisees, yet wept over the devoted city. And Paul, while warning the disciples of the Lord against the character and the doom of opposers and apostates, breathed none other than the spirit of Christ. "Brethren, be ye followers of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction."

I must not enlarge. Much have I omitted, lest I should inexcusably presume upon your indulgence. But I could hardly feel warranted to say less, in exposition of the nature of the "weapons of our warfare,"—our own warfare, my brethren, if "we do not war according to the flesh," and if, like Paul, we labor to promote the gospel, by publishing it as a definite and distinctive system of faith and practice, indispensable to salvation and freely offered to all; publishing it in simplicity and godly sincerity, without the inventions or admixtures, the artifices and embellishments of worldly wisdom, and without false professions to secure honors or emoluments; publishing it with earnestness most intense as, being a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death, and with boldness, as that of which none should be ashamed, but which all should be ready to confess and to proclaim in all places; publishing it with meekness and humility, because its most honored champions are themselves but pardoned rebels, and because their preaching is made effectual only by the power of the Holy Ghost, in answer to fervent prayer; and publishing it in love—love to God, love to Christ, love to the Church, love to all men—holy love—universal, unbounded, ever-enduring philanthropy.

These weapons are indeed not carnal. The means by which Paul achieved such triumphs for the honor of Christ Jesus, were of the kingdom which is "righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." From those, who, as the professed friends of Christ, and of souls perishing in sin, would otherwise seek to gain victories and conquests in the empire of the powers of darkness, the cause of our Redeemer needs no assistance. One such warrior in "the good fight of faith," as was Paul, would achieve more than a thousand thousand or a thousand million of them.

And as now we look back from our advanced position, can any distrust the "weapons of our warfare," which were ordained and furnished by Him, who is "wonderful in counsel and excellent in working?" Did not the ancient "soldiers of the cross" plant the banner of the Prince of Peace and of Life upon the ramparts or the ruins of all the majestic and magnificent structures of idolatry and classic mythology, throughout the almost interminable empire of the Cæsars? what "strongholds" then, from the Arctic circle to the capes of the South Atlantic and Pacific, can be too strong for "the sacramental host of God's elect," if they will but take to themselves "the whole armor of God; having their loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness, and their feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God; praying always

with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit?" As ministers at home, or as missionaries abroad—from the river to the ends of the earth,—what more do we need, and what have we to fear, if the truth and Christ be in us, and for us?

If ever for one moment we are tempted to inquire, whether, in "the faith once delivered to the saints," and in "the whole armor of God," we have all that is requisite for the world's emancipation from all its bondage,—let history speak to us, as God's witness in providence. Let it suffice, and more than suffice, to mark the recorded results of all such pretensions and movements, as those of some in our days, who claim to have left the prophets and apostles far behind them, and even to have hope of seeing, as well as heralding, a "better" JESUS, than "Paul preached!!" Such are they, who verily would "turn the world upside down," if large numbers could be infatuated or stultified enough, to embrace their impious and detestable fooleries,—gravely propounded as they are, with so many "goodly words," as reason, freedom, equality, fraternity, progress, happiness, perfection! Let them all throw off the mask, "as the manner of some is," and it is no violation of the "charity" which is of Christ, to say of them, that we should "see the dragon's nature in their bosom!"

It would be "a new thing under the sun," for Satan to "cast out Satan." And would that they who have named the name of Christ, and most of all that they who minister in that name, would more experimentally and faithfully remember that his kingdom is not of this world; that, despised as may be the gospel, it is mighty to the uttermost through Christ's all-sufficiency and almightiness; and that, while bold as lions, the servants of the Lord that bought them, with blood most precious, should ever be wise as serpents and harmless as doves! O if it had always been thus, there could not have been, at this eventful period of the 19th century, so much of the land of promise yet to be possessed—so many millions of heathen in such fearfully dark places of the earth, and who have never heard the name of Jesus, or the first note of the song:—"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth salvation!" If, since the farewell charge upon the Mount of Olives, all that have named the name of Christ, had been faithful to his word and spirit, as was Paul, then would they have been to the enemies of the cross "terrible as an army with banners;" and they would have gone forth from conquering to conquer, until long since "every knee" should have been constrained to "bow, and every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

It is, as I humbly conceive, no common responsibility, whatever may be said of the privilege,—which pertains to the office of a minister of the gospel, in our ancient commonwealth of Massachusetts. May I then be permitted to inquire, to what end we have now come up to this city of the fathers and of the children, at this anniversary of "holy convocation?" What do we hear, as ministers of the New Testament,—worthy in any measure of our "high calling,"—if "we seek our own, and not the things which are

Jesus Christ's;" and if, while participating in these numerous solemnities, we do not find it in our hearts to return to our pulpits and the people of our charge, with a renewed resolution in love stronger than death, that we will PREACH CHRIST more faithfully than ever—as much as in us lies,—by the power "of faith and of the Holy Ghost?" What higher commission than ours can mortals have, from the highest heaven? And who is sufficient for the trust thereof, without Christ and the spirit of Christ, as his light, love, and life?

While he himself, our adorable Master and Saviour, has left us in his own divine ministry—when "in the days of his flesh,"—that human example, which can so far be appropriated and approached, that Paul might say to us,—"Brethren, be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ,"—it is yet an occasion of unspeakable gratitude, that we have the apostle's own undying example, for our instruction, our admonition, and our animating consolation. Can any of us follow him too closely, in any one principle, rule, or characteristic of all those means, by which "Christ wrought" in him, "to make the gentiles obedient, by word and deed?" Ours is the same Lord, the same gospel, the same baptism, the same rejoicing hope. Let us, therefore, so preach the gospel, as we have him for our example; and like him, let us feel that all our sufficiency is of God in Christ, and Christ in our own souls. And to this end, may the word of Christ dwell in us richly in all wisdom!

"If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" Let no man, then, ever be at a loss to determine what it is that we preach, as the gospel of Christ; and let no sincere and kindly-affectioned believer in Jesus ever have occasion for a doubt, that we preach the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,—as opportunity is given us to magnify our office. Whatever may be the signs of the times; whatever the aspect of the churches in this "goodly heritage," now extended from ocean to ocean; whatever the encouragements or the discouragements in our immediate sphere of labor and of trial,—whether we have a refreshing from on high, or the love of many waxes cold, and iniquity abounds, and we seem to be in the very region and shadow of death;—let us still preach Christ and him crucified, as the sovereign remedy for all the woes of man, until time shall be no more.

In the spirit and devotedness of Paul, we also should be "determined not to know anything save Jesus Christ and him crucified." And like him too we should ever in our preaching, spontaneously and impressibly, make manifest our personal and our joyous faith in the Creator and the Crucified as ONE. Ineffectual, utterly ineffectual, for the purposes and the ends of the Christian ministry, will be all our preaching,—if we do not HONOR THE SON EVEN AS THE FATHER! It will not, it cannot be, in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,—witness, if example were needed, the memorable ministrations of Chalmers,—intellectual, accomplished, earnest, and eloquent as he was,—in his fourteen years at Kilmany. It cannot be possible for us to make too much of Christ, in our private and our public life; or to preach too many sermons ALL OF CHRIST.

We are of course to avoid all appearance and all reality of aim at "excellency of speech," as if of men we sought glory. But the beauty of holiness and love in the gospel is infinitely worthy of the richest and the purest offerings of human genius, learning, and refinement. True it is as ever, according to the sacred description and commendation of eloquence, that "a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." And we are without excuse,—certainly the most of us,—if we ever prompt a hearer to inquire, whether there be any incompatibility between the requirements of evangelical truth and the laws of good taste; or whether any man can be warranted to make the offence of the cross still more an offence to the carnal mind, by a seeming or an actual disregard of those proprieties and attractions of style, in which the original Scriptures excel all the literature of all nations.

Such "foolishness" as Paul had in his preaching, it is very safe and very wise in us now to have. But his "foolishness of preaching," so called, was not FOOLISH preaching nor vulgarity, nor discourtesy. "Since I have known God in a saving manner," Henry Martyn once remarked, "painting, poetry, and music, have had charms unknown to me before. I have received what I suppose is a taste for them: for religion has refined my mind, and made it susceptible of impressions for the sublime and beautiful. O how religion secures the heightened enjoyment of those pleasures which keep so many from God, by their becoming a source of pride!" Such a testimony is above suspicion, and is not to be lightly esteemed.

To her preachers, from the beginning hitherto, New England has been most indebted, under God, for her unrivalled advancement in civilization, her exalted character of intelligence, her correctness and propriety and strength of language, as well as her distinction in theology and morals. But no man can shut his eyes to the fact, that there has never been so great a degree of enlightened elevation among the people at large, nor so much of intellectual activity applied to all subjects and objects; and hence never so much of imperative demand for a high order of excellence in the general or ordinary character of the ministrations of the sanctuary. To such a state of things we must adapt ourselves, as best we may, by our diligence in study, and our increased watchfulness unto prayer. But, alas, are there not too many of us, who have no light reason to fear, that we STUDY FAR LESS, because we PRAY THE LESS? And if the study and the closet of all could here testify, would it not be said of more than one, in the lamenting confessions of another, that "want of private devotional reading and shortness of prayer, through incessant sermon-making, had produced strangeness between God and his soul!"

And my beloved and respected brethren, why is it, that we so often seem to forget, that we stand between the living and the dead? It cannot, full well I know, be expected of any of Christ's ministers, that they should always be alike interested, earnest, powerful and impressive. But if we preach of heaven and hell, as "a stone speaking to stones," or if when redeeming love is our

theme, we are as cold and passionless as the unquarried marble,—how can it be, that we commend the truth to any man's conscience, or how do we anything, as becometh us, that Christ may see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied ?

Yet must it be remembered, that no one has a commission to preach, as if in his own hands were "the keys of hell and of death," and it was for him to open or shut at his pleasure. And a sad blemish, if not a fearful sign of the inward spirit or interior life, it must be regarded in any man's preaching, who declaims of "the damnation of hell," as if sure of personal deliverance from the wrath to come, and cared little, except as effecting his place and emoluments, whether his hearers repented, or perished ! Not so was he who ceased not to warn every man, day and night, with tears, and who always exercised himself to have a conscience void of offence, and so unremittingly watched over his remaining propensities of corruption and liabilities of iniquity,—lest after having preached the gospel to others, he himself should be a castaway !

There are views that we might take of ourselves and our responsibilities, which, if long cherished and not counteracted, would seriously hinder us in our work, and greatly embitter our sweetest satisfactions. An example, if I do not much mistake, we have in that eminently holy young man, David Brainerd ; so also in a marked degree, in the godly and devout Henry Martyn ; not to speak of Payson and of others, whose praise is in all our churches. But may I say to my coævals, and more especially to my younger brethren, that, if we would have as heavenly a spirit as that of Payson, or of Martyn, or of Brainerd, and as close a walk with God, —with a cheerfulness and a lovliness unsurpassed in any whom we have ever known,—we may find a model with which many may do well to be more familiar. I refer to Robert Murray McCheyne, of the Free Church of Scotland, and who, not inappropriately, has been called the Henry Martyn of Scotland.

Perhaps some may have known of him only by that song of "Jehovah Tzideknu," or "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS,"—a strain, which would seem to be pure and sweet enough for the holiest melodies of a blood-bought harp in heaven. Upon the beauty of HIS life unto Christ—amidst severe infirmities and most arduous toils,—there was no veil, and no tinge or shadow of sombre melancholy. He had joy in believing ; and joy over many sinners repenting. "He dwelt while here below, far away from the damps that rise about Doubting Castle, and hard by the Beulah, where the sunlight ever falls." And why should not we—all of us,—and why not all here present with us, or associated with us, as "fellow-helpers to the truth,"—why should not we all be thus devoted,—be thus lovely and heavenly,—thus happy and rejoicing in the Lord our Righteousness ?

Young as he was, he was accustomed to seal his letters, with the impression of the sun going down behind the mountains, and the motto on it—"The night cometh." Brethren, "the night cometh," very soon to some of us. But not too soon, for him who is ready and waiting for his Lord. Meanwhile, when so much can be

attempted, and so much may be done by the faithful servant of the Son of God, in the very shortest term of active usefulness, at a period like that now passing; in a land whose far-distant west is but a hand's breadth from the Orient—a land of such providential loving-kindness, such ancestral renown, such amazing developments, hour by hour, and such wonders of magnificent and overpowering anticipation, in the accelerated coming of the future of prophecy and of hope; O let each be valiant for the truth as in Jesus, until he shall hear the summons—"Come up hither and take thy crown!", Amen.

SERMON XVI.

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THE SUFFERINGS AND THE GLORY.

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."—Rom. viii. 18.

The apostle speaks in a similar strain in 2 Cor. iv. 17. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

The present is a state of afflictions and trials. They fall somewhere; they come at some time. The apostle represents the entire world as in a burdened and suffering condition; not only Christians, but all men; not only the rational, but the irrational, and even the inanimate. "For we know," he says, "that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain until now: and not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies." In the text, the apostle speaks of sufferings here, of a glory which shall be revealed in us, and of the comparison between the two.

I. Let us turn our minds, for a few moments, to the present sufferings, or the sufferings of this present time. There may be here a reference to the peculiar tribulations of Christians in that cruel and persecuting period. But the language is not confined to that period; for sufferings on the part of Christians, were not peculiar to that period; as has been remarked, they are the lot of all time.

In speaking of the sufferings of Christians, I shall first adduce those sufferings which are peculiar to the Christian character and experience. As the disciple of Christ, the renewed heart has joys with which the stranger intermeddleth not, so he has sorrows of which the mere worldly mind has no experience.

His sufferings from the presence and workings of sin within him, are often keen; sometimes overwhelming. He is not yet wholly delivered from sin; but he hates it, and watches and prays against it, and if endowed with the spirit of his Master, he will resist it even unto blood. There is suffering in these conflicts—these wrestlings with the enemy; and if sin gets the advantage, as it sometimes will, and he is thrown down and defiled, there is greater suffering still. David calls it the anguish of broken bones. More than this occasionally, even the bitter agony of a broken spirit,—all this, because he is a Christian of so high attainments, that sin has become to him the greatest possible evil and offence.

The Christian sometimes suffers from the assaults of the adversary. We know that Christ's sufferings from this quarter were very great; none greater came upon him, except those connected with the scene of the crucifixion. As it was with the Master, so it will be with the disciple. The great enemy will assail him, and vex and worry, and turn for a season, even the springs of his happiness into waters of wormwood.

There are sufferings to the Christian from an opposing, not to say persecuting world. The world does not love the pure gospel of Christ, the world hates it for its claims, its restrictions, its penalties; and those who have professed it, have in times past encountered all the ills human malice could dispense. They have had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings; yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonments. They have been stoned, they have been sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword. All the instruments and engines of death have been often employed, and their utmost capabilities in the work of torture have been exhausted upon the followers of the Lord Jesus. Multitudes in every period have tested the whole fearful meaning of the declaration, "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

But there is a more refined persecution; it strikes not the body; the iron, in this case, enters the soul; there is the taunt, the sneer, the shaft of ridicule, the uttered blasphemy. Christ's saying has been verified in every period of the church, that a man's foes shall be they of his own houshold. And, perhaps, no suffering for the cause of Christ, can exceed the sufferings of those who cannot be Christians peaceably, with toleration at home; who have not only no sympathy there, in their best hopes and joys, but have even forfeited confidence, and are subjected to an outbreaking opposition and an unnatural hate from those most dear to them, simply because they love the Saviour, and profess and obey his gospel.

The Christian, in some instances, suffers intensely from the fluctuations of experience. The light is withdrawn from him, and hope is almost extinct, and there comes over him the dreary sense of the divine abandonment. He feels to some small extent as Christ when he exclaimed, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" in some measure as David did, when he uttered those dismal interrogatives, "Will the Lord cast off forever? And will he be favorable no more? Is his mercy clean gone forever? Doth his promise fail forever more? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?" And he may add with the psalmist, "This is my infirmity." It is, perhaps, his infirmity—a mysterious disease, reaching to the seats, and rudely sweeping all the chords of feeling; operating, in some instances, as an iron shutter to all the windows of the soul, keeping from the imprisoned tenant every descending beam of day; so that everything wears a hue of gloom; the prayer attempted seems all heartless and scattering, a mockery to the great hearer of prayer; the hope once cherished, a baseless delusion; God appears ONLY as awful in justice and holiness; Christ ONLY as the armed and avenging King; the Comforter, ONLY as the grieved and banished spirit; death, the per-

sonification and embodiment of all conceivable terrors. Such the working of the infirmity. And who can tell the suffering in such a case? Who but the sufferer knows it?

There is another class of sufferings I will advert to; those of a worldly and providential nature. With these, the Christian is visited in common with the rest of mankind.

The Christian, equally with others, is exposed to the vicissitudes of the world; the defeating of earthly plans, the blasting of worldly hopes—to the evils and deep distresses of remediless poverty. Even Christ himself had not where to lay his head.

There are also the sufferings arising from sickness and decay. These, at some time and in some form, all must encounter. If any have lived years without feeling the wilting hand of disease upon them, let them be thankful, and not presume that it will long continue to be so with them. The Christian may have great consolation in the season of his visitation, but the visitation he must ordinarily receive; he may not hope to escape.

It has probably struck the attentive observer, that the Christian's sufferings, of a bodily nature, are often far greater than the sufferings of those who die in hardened impiety. Not unfrequently do we see the ungodly and profane, passing quietly out of life, having no bands in their death; whilst others, eminent for holiness, linger and wear out by the simple force and process of tormenting pain. God's reasons for so doing we will not now undertake to penetrate.

It may be to show the power of godliness—the sustaining energy of the Christian's hope. It may be a discipline—the kindling of a fire to purge away the remaining dross of sin. It may, in part, be a chastisement; light strokes administered, in a momentary but corrective displeasure, for some offences or neglects which cannot be passed wholly by. Whatever the cause, the sufferings are sometimes great. The Christian's death-bed, while it may be a place of inward peace or positive triumph, the last struggles of a crowning victory, it may also be a place in which centre the sharpest piercings, and over which roll the heaviest billows of pain.

There are the sufferings also attendant on bereavement—the removal by death of beloved friends. The cords of attachment grow strong, and very closely bind heart to heart. The parental, the filial, the fraternal, the conjugal tie, seems to pass around often and encompass every other joy; and when sundered, it is as though everything were taken. The circumstances, perhaps, all administer to the heart's deep anguish. He sank down among strangers; he sleeps in a foreign grave, or on the coral bed. The Christian knows it is all wisely done; but he feels the cleaving stroke. And in the fresh intensity of his sorrow, in the first tumult of his grief, he realizes not the assuaging power of these divine considerations. He dwells only upon what he has lost. His memory recurs and fixes with a mournful tenacity, upon those objects and thoughts which are the most perfectly adapted to harrow still more, the already torn and throbbing sensibilities. The room, the seat the loved one occupied; all the little arrangements as he left them; the books as he marked and laid them away; the garments where he hung them; the trees those hands did plant; the grounds those feet

did tread—each is made to contribute its pang in this ministry of grief, till the heart can hold no more, till in its paroxysms it swells and heaves almost to bursting. Such the anguish of bereavement, sometimes, before religion has had time to soothe by its healing appliance.

I will not dwell longer upon the sufferings of this present time, nor go more into details. They are manifold and inevitable. We may be spared for a season, we cannot be perpetually. Sooner or later, each must take his share. A long forborne stroke is apt, when it comes, to be a repeated stroke. It is a world of change and of suffering; there are withered hearts and blighted hopes; friends parting; countenances changing; graves opening; tears flowing. There are the pains of the body, and the sorrows of the mind; the afflictions of life, and the bitter agonies of death; and the Christian drinks as often and as deeply of this cup as do others.

II. But let us turn away, in the second place, to that other and contrasted scene, "the glory which shall be revealed in us" And what can we say here? The sufferings are matters of experience; the glory, only of faith; not yet revealed; indeed, it cannot be fully revealed. Our natures could bear no open manifestation. Mortal eye cannot behold, nor ear hear, nor heart conceive, the things which God has prepared for them that love him. Were it not so, mortal language would fail in its powers of communication. The spirit of inspiration makes some attempts to shadow forth the coming blessedness of the Christian. It is glory that shall be revealed in us; a glory in the presence of God; the glorious liberty of the children of God; the riches of the glorious inheritance of the saints; an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Here we come to Paul's magnificent and laboring utterance,—exploding language, as it were, by the swelling hugeness of the idea,—a greatness excessively exceeding,—a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; one of the strongest and most remarkable expressions ever penned or uttered. We are farther told of the life; the eternal life; the crown of life; a life hid with Christ in God; of an enduring substance; an immovable kingdom; a building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; Christians are to walk in white; they are to reign with Christ; they are to have bodies fashioned like unto his glorious body. These various modes of description are obviously intended to set forth to our minds, as vividly as the nature of the case admits, that state of wonderful exaltation and happiness. That state is the Christian's sure possession; toward it he is borne on the rapid wing of time; a state in which there will be no sin; none of these sufferings and conflicts and bitter mournings; where all tears will be wiped away, all trials merged in triumphs,—a state of renewed intercourse with redeemed friends, and high companionship with saints and angels; a state of enlarging and striding knowledge, where we shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known; a state in which love will be perfected, and all pervading, and all blessing with its sweet and hallowed intensity. But why attempt to describe that state, that glory which shall be revealed, but not yet revealed; when all our attempts seem as nothing, and we can only retreat back upon Paul's doubled hyperbole,

and gain a little relief to our conceptions, in the use of his masterly extravagance, crying out and wondering as we repeat—"a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

III. Having considered some of the suffering here, and attempted to glance at the glory hereafter, we might pause long enough to institute a comparison between the two. But there is no comparison of a momentary sorrow, with an infinite and eternal joy. The apostle thought so amid the heavy trials of his lot; burdened as he was, with an unwonted responsibility; carrying about with him that dread infirmity, the thorn in the flesh; surrounded with enemies, traduced, beaten, killed, all the day long; the sufferings were present and almost without a parallel in Christian endurance; the glory future, and apprehended only by faith. He weighed the matter; he calculated carefully; he balanced the account, and this was his settled judgment, I RECKON; I ACCOUNT, that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. And can any one hesitate in coming to the same conclusion? We might refer the question to one of far feebler faith, and in still deeper trouble; one on whom the hand of affliction was pressing most heavily, and the glory seemed dim and far away. Even such an one could not fail to utter the same judgment—NOT WORTHY TO BE COMPARED; the affliction for a moment, the glory eternal; the affliction light, the glory unmeasured in weight and worth. Can the depressed and most sorrowing heart, hesitate in the judgment,—NOT WORTHY TO BE COMPARED. Suppose we pass to the other side of the scale, and put the question to a higher reference; to one of those spirits before the throne, who have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Be the umpire one who encountered every form and variety of earthly trial; the direst malignacy of persecution; the most desolating strokes of bereavement; the tortures of a racked and groaning body; and the still keener anguish of a wounded spirit. That spirit, thus tossed and troubled, is now resting in the embrace of infinite and protecting love. That heart which at times drooped beneath the weight of its sorrows, now swells with the fulness of unutterable joys. It has felt its last pang; now it is perfect peace. Thus that purified intelligence has tried both sides; has had experience of the worst griefs of time, and of the commenced and growing blessedness of eternity. Ask him his judgment; and what, think you, he would say, as he looked back upon this little point and speck of trouble, and as he thought of the immeasurable felicities of his present and secured immortality? What would he say? He would say with the utmost reach of language and strength of emphasis, and all the redeemed would join in and peal forth their intense agreement, till those eternal pillars should tremble with the utterance — NOT WORTHY TO BE COMPARED.

IV. But though there is no comparison, there is a connection, between the present suffering and the future glory. Allow me in a remark or two upon this connection—the beneficent nature and working of it. We see in it the blessed hand of God, here as everywhere, bringing good out of evil; taking from the very jaws

and bowels of sorrow, a shining tribute of joy; all things, all trials made to work for good. These afflictions, when the mind comes out from them ascendant, work into the character an element of strength and assurance, a conscious supremacy over the assailments of trial and evil; producing a character that has met the storm, and now firmer stands for the blasts it has successfully sustained—a character refined and made purer by the fire, and more shining from the rough and hard attritions. These light afflictions, by working these things in us, work out for us that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; weighter for these light afflictions.

In this way, this view, the future glory gives strength to bear the present trial. That future glory—let it shine back and put to shame and silence every rising murmur. If ever tempted to say, or even feel, that God is unkind in putting upon you so great a trial, as you seemed doomed to carry, pause long enough to think of your path unto it. God unkind, because he did not spare you that visitation, when he spared not his own Son, but gave him up freely for us all? God unkind in the discipline he employs to cleanse your soul and fit it for that high state? Look up and think at once of what he has prepared and done, and you will discover in all, nothing but a father's solicitude and an overflowing goodness. If ever ready to faint or give over, saying, all these things are against me; every event an adversity; every new scene a trial; remember still to look up and think of the glory, and gather from above strength and courage, and so hold on your way, ever struggling to reach the goal and gain the prize. Then all these things you here so much dread, will prove helpers to your deliverance—added gems in your crown.

Another thing is here suggested, namely, while the future glory gives strength to bear the present trial, the present trial in turn will heighten the fruition of the future glory. I have said, no COMPARISON can be instituted; but there is a CONTRAST which the delivered soul will feel, and which will fill it with wonder—so sudden, so perfect. Mark that weary disciple, who had a long and severe discipline and sorrowing experience; whose sensibilities were mostly ministers of pain; whose clayey tabernacle was often turned into a prison by thick and brooding infirmities; who realized little faith and frequent fears—conflicts, doubts, sufferings, for years his bosom companions, till he seems to cleave to them, as though they were his inheritance. The hour of redemption at length arrives: the submerging waters are passed: and in an instant, the celestial glory stands all revealed. As the darkness settles heavily here, the light opens transportingly there; and as the body is sending out the last moaning sounds of death, the spirit begins to hear and even join in those heavenly melodies. To such an one—to one coming out of that tribulation, rising above those billows, parting forever with those pains and glooms and labors, but remembering them all: how refreshing must be that rest; how sweet that peace; how glorious that triumph; how immeasurably heightened all that joyous possession and experience by the scenes which have been gone through. We are lost here: we know but little. Blessed shall we be, if we

reach that state, and learn by experience the riches and the mysteries of its glory.

We see here the firm ground for the grace of patience; and how lovely is this grace; how important that we possess it; that it grow strong; that there be put into it firm nerves and sinews, so that we be able to bear the afflictions we cannot shun; not only the momentary, but those wearying burdens, which can only be laid down with the burden of our mortality. Happy those who thus endure to the end, and show, through all, the patience of the saints.

Let me say, finally, if these are light afflictions, these joys of sense are also light joys; these are shadowy and vain possessions. How low and mean, to be the great object of pursuit to one made in the image and for the service of God: and how these things must look in the retrospect of a lost eternity! If lost, you will see them then as the price of your soul. You will know that you bartered heaven for that now perished baseness. You will behold it in the distance, a floating trifle, a receding speck of dirt; and yet it was the price of your soul. Let me remind you that soon you will leave the little things, the gildings, the baubles and the vanities, and go forth to the substantial, the infinite, the eternal. Awake! watch! strive! or this lying world will work for you, and lay upon you a dreadful burden; the burden of your Maker's curse, because you would not hear his counsel and embrace his Son. You will lie under it forever—a far more exceeding and eternal weight of misery.

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SERMON XVII.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE CROSS THE POWER OF GOD.*

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"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness, but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God."—1 Cor. i. 18.

This is the language of triumph. It is an appeal of the apostle to those who had been the witnesses and the subjects of his labors, that the preaching, or rather the doctrine, of the cross, was doing that for men which all the wisdom of the world had failed to do, and in comparison of which, all things beside were unimportant. It was morally renovating and saving them—saving them from the power of sin and the misery of the second death: and so, to those who came under its influence, despised though it was by such as neglected it, and lay perishing in their sin, it was distinctively and demonstrably the power of God. "Where is the wise?" he proceeds to say, "where is the reviler? where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

The doctrine of the cross to them that are saved is the power of God. In illustration of this, I would show what is the doctrine of the cross, and how this doctrine, to them that are saved is the power of God.

I. What is the doctrine of the cross. As explained by the apostle, it is the doctrine of "Christ crucified." It is not, however, a mere history of his crucifixion; for this, taken separately from its relations, and import, would have no such efficacy as is attributed to the doctrine. Thousands of men have been crucified who have lived unknown and died unfelt. Nor does it

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refer to the sufferings of Christ on the cross, exclusively of his previous sufferings; but to his sufferings and humiliation, generally designated by the cross as having been consummated in the cross: nor yet are these to be taken exclusively of his obedience, for having been voluntarily endured, they implied obedience of the highest character. The doctrine of the cross is the scheme of doctrine concerning "Christ crucified" generally; and, among other particulars essential to it, these two are especially important—the peculiarity of his person, and the main end of his death. It is to the last of these more particularly that I invite your attention.

Assuming that Paul preached "Christ crucified" as being God incarnate, "of the seed of David according to the flesh," and "the Son of God according to the spirit of holiness," "God manifest in the flesh," I would show, that, in respect to the main end of his death, the doctrine of the cross as preached by him is the doctrine of the atonement: that is, that Christ died, not as a martyr only, sealing his testimony with his blood; nor as an example only, leading the way to God, and encouraging us through suffering and shame, to follow him; nor only as an impressive manifestation of God in himself to bring us to repentance, and through our repentance procure our justification before the eternal throne,—but as an expiatory sacrifice freely offered to God, and, as such, the ground of our justification, on our believing in him for that vital benefit.

He who was in the beginning with God and was God, was made flesh and dwelt among us. Seeing the race perishing in apostasy from God, he appeared for our deliverance; he became one of us; he united himself to the race in its fallen state; cast in his lot with us; was made under the law as we are; was subject to its curse in respect to the evils of life and the suffering of death, in common with us; and, joining himself to us in the experience of a common lot, he was joined to us also in the tenderest sympathy: "took upon him our infirmities and carried our sorrows," in the feeling of *our* burdens, superadded to sufferings of *his own;* entered into the depths of our woe with a sensibility heightened by the purity that was pained at the sense of our sin, as well as the benevolence which shared the sense of our sufferings. Now are the toil, sorrow, and death, to which we are subject, to be regarded as divine inflictions for sin, and in this sense penal, however through grace, they have a disciplinary use? Is it so, as Moses, "the man of God," in his memorable "prayer," said, that "we are consumed by his anger, and by his wrath we are troubled?" And to this dread lot was Christ subjected, although himself was not only sinless, but divine, coming among us for our redemption. Could there be no exemption for him—no mitigation of the curse? but, on the contrary, did it fall on him, interposing himself for our protection in all its terribleness? so that his visage was more

marred than any man's, and his form more than the sons of men? in a world of sorrows, signalized as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief? And when, beside the sufferings incident to humanity by the necessity of its condition, he was subject to all manner of abuse from the malignity of men, was there no voice from heaven for his vindication, and no legion of angels for his rescue? And when in immediate prospect of the last dreadful scene he prayed that if it were possible the cup might pass from him, was it not possible? And when forsaken of human sympathy, and given up to the will of his enemies to be mocked and crucified, was he also forsaken of God? and even when God was challenged by his crucifiers to deliver him, if he would have him, would he not deliver him? Must the dread sentence proceed with unbending severity until he who was the Prince of life bowed his head in death? And was all this ordained of God, as holy men, divinely inspired, had foretold, "to make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness?" or as Paul says, "to declare the righteousness of God for the remission of sins, that he might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Then I say, and this is what I mean when I say that Christ died to make atonement for sin—the sins of the world—he died that we might live, not merely to bring us to repentance, but to make repentance availing for our forgiveness; or in the language of Butler, "put us into a capacity of escaping future punishment, and obtaining future happiness." I would not say that Christ suffered the wrath of God. He was, and he could not but know that he was, God's well-beloved Son, but he was one of us, "all whose days are passed away in his wrath." I would not say that he suffered the penalty of the divine law,—this comprehends the eternal as well as temporal consequences of sin,—but he did suffer, and that in great measure, those temporal sufferings, which, coming on us, are penal. They were not punishment as appointed to him,—punishment is evil inflicted on the guilty,—but they were appointed to him, and most freely borne as the divinely constituted substitute for the punishment due to us, to answer its end, and remove the necessity of its infliction on our return to God by him. They were not such, either in kind or degree, as those must endure whose end is to be punished; but they were great and dreadful, beyond all other experience in the present life. The sufferings of the cross were dreadful, and to those were added mental sufferings, more so. I cannot enter into the mystery of his agony in the garden, or of his complaint on the cross. I can imagine him to have suffered as none but one who loved as he did could suffer; under his sense of the ingratitude and malignity of men, I can imagine him under his own burden to have had an overwhelming sense of ours. I see him troubled in spirit at the grave of Lazarus. I see *him weep. I hear him groan.* It was in sympathy with

the griefs, and in view of the death, the corruption, and the grave, which sin had caused in the world; and, when in the garden he had in prospect, and on the cross the experience, of his own sufferings for sin, I imagine his sympathy with a world of sinners sinking under the wrath of God into everlasting woe, to have been moved to its utmost depths. I know, too, that there is such a thing as the hiding of God's face; and that to those who love him, it gives pain which they alone can understand and feel: I can suppose this, in the experience of Jesus, to have occasioned a horror of darkness which "the only begotten of the Father" alone could experience. Still I regard the subject as involved in mystery, knowing only that his sufferings were inconceivably great. It is not, however, to the greatness of his sufferings, so much as the greatness of the sufferer, that the Scriptures ascribe the efficacy of his death as a propitiatory sacrifice. "How much more," says Paul, "shall the blood of Christ who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot unto God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" It was saying much to speak of our great High Priest as "offering himself unto God." It was saying more to speak of him as offering "himself unto God without spot." But when he proceeds to declare who he was that offered himself; when he proceeds to say that he was not a man only, but also the eternal God; that his offering of himself was through, or by, "the eternal Spirit," well might he make the appeal: and we tremble and rejoice to hear it, "How much more?" If the dignity of the sufferer and his relation to God, could be of any account at all, in the adequateness of his sufferings as a substitute for the punishment of a rebel world, what limit can there be to the efficacy of his death for this end, who was not only one of the world, but also the world's Creator and Lord?

That this is the doctrine of the cross, as it was preached by Paul, appears—

1. From the importance which he attaches to the cross. Preaching the cross was in his view preaching the gospel. The cross was his constant, and, in a sense, his only theme,—the beginning and end, the sum and substance of his teachings; all deriving from this their distinctive character. The same importance is attributed to the cross in the other Scriptures. This was the great object of the Jewish ritual. As the apostle remarks, all things are by the law purged with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no remission; and the end of these expiations he declares to have been the foreshadowing of the great sacrifice in the death of Christ. This was the object to which the spirit of inspiration turned the gazing eyes of the ancient prophets. The scene which excited their most eager inquiries as the Spirit opened to them the curtain of futurity, was "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow."

This was the theme on which Moses and Elias, the giver of the law and the chief of the prophets, appearing in glory with our Saviour on the Mount of Transfiguration, held converse with him. They "spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." This, in its relation to his subsequent reign, is also the object of the angels' intent regard. "Which things the angels desire to look into." And this is the subject of the everlasting song of the redeemed, "Worthy," they cry, "is the Lamb that was slain." Now, regarding the cross as the symbol of the atonement, we see a manifest reason for all this. We see in it an importance answerable to the surpassing interest which the worshippers of God in heaven and on earth have felt in it. On this peculiarly hang the hopes of a dying world. This is the central point of the Christian system, its peculiarity and its glory—that which distinguishes it from all else that is called religion—all else that is called Christianity. Take away the expiatory character of the cross, and you attach, importance it may be, but no peculiar importance to it; you attribute to it nothing distinctive; you make the preaching of Christ crucified in no other sense than as you make the preaching of Christ our teacher, or Christ our example, the preaching of the gospel.

2. That this is the doctrine of the cross, as it was preached by Paul, appears from its being foolishness to them that perish. There is nothing foolish—nothing incredible or strange—in the doctrine of a martyr's death. Such a death well accords with the history of human depravity; and, when suffered with fortitude and meekness, is honorable. Were the doctrine of the cross only the doctrine that Jesus died as a martyr or a reformer, it would be regarded by all men with admiration. Rousseau himself, so regarding it, said, "If Socrates died as a philosopher, Jesus Christ died as a God." But the doctrine of the atonement involves considerations which the unbelieving world do not appreciate. It contemplates mankind as sinners, as transgressors of the law of God; and condemns to eternal death. It supposes the law which condemns them to be just and good, the penalty no less just and good than the precept; and God, the infinitely just and benevolent Judge of all, bent on the execution of the one, to maintain the authority of the other, except as the end might be otherwise attained. It declares that end to be attained by the cross in the pardon of the penitent; and calls on men accordingly to return to God by it, acknowledging their iniquity, submitting themselves to his law, and casting themselves on his mercy in Christ for the justification of life. Now it is easy to see that to those who are convinced of sin, this doctrine is the wisdom of God. They see an occasion for the stupendous provision, and an answerableness in the provision to the occasion, glorious alike to his justice and his mercy. But mankind in their natural blindness, do not see the doctrine in this light. The position from which they view it, is

not that of sinners self-condemned; and, therefore, "to them that perish, it is foolishness."

3. That this is the doctrine of the cross as preached by Paul, appears from his more explicit account of it in other passages. To only a few of these can I now refer you. Paul preached that Christ died *for our sins*. "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die,—peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. Here you will remark the supposition is that of a man's dying not only in behalf, but instead of another; as David, in his grief for Absalom, said, "Would God I had died *for thee*, O Absalom, my son!" Such, therefore, is the meaning, when, in carrying out the contrast, Paul says, "But God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, in due time Christ died *for* us." The vicarious principle is asserted here. But Paul preached not only that Christ died *for us*, but that he died for *our sins*. "I delivered unto you, first of all," he says to the Corinthians, "that which I also received,—how that Christ *died for our sins*, according to the Scriptures." A person dies for his own sins, when he suffers death in punishment of them. Christ died for our sins, as he died to save us from that punishment. Our sins made it necessary that either he or we ourselves should die. He suffered the death of the cross for them that we might not suffer death eternal. Paul preached also more expressly that Christ died *in order that we might be forgiven*. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare the righteousness of God for the remission of sins." Forgiveness of sins, is remission of the punishment of them. As Christ died for the forgiveness, or remission of sins, he died to save us from the punishment which we have incurred by them. And, yet more significantly of this, he preached that Christ died *a sin-offering*,—died *a sacrifice to God for our sins*. "Now once, in the end of the world, hath he appeared to put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself." "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." It is not necessary to understand this in the most literal sense. There is no doubt a great difference between an altar and the cross, and the office of the high priest in the temple and that of the Roman soldiers on Calvary; but, in effect, Christ was at once our high priest, our altar, and our sacrifice. His death was not only violent, but it was voluntary; he offered himself: and how Paul and the Hebrews to whom he wrote understood this, there can be no doubt. The allusion to the expiatory offerings of the temple points us to the expiatory nature and design of the offering of Christ. I will add, only, that, according to the preaching of Paul, Christ died to reconcile us to God. "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself, by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, re-

conciling the world unto himself." This means not so directly that God is bringing the world into submission to his government, as that He is administering his government placably to the world; for this is the explanation subjoined, "not imputing their trespasses to them,"—not setting these in the account as an obstacle to their peace with him,—proclaiming a general amnesty to the world on the condition of its submission to him. This relation of God to the world, the apostle asserts, is in, or by Christ, and not only so, but it is by his death as a propitiatory sacrifice,—it being immediately added as the ground of the wonderful procedure,—"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." A mutual peace,—a reciprocal love between God and a rebellious world, no doubt is the reconciliation intended; but the basis of it is, the pacification of God towards the world by the blood of the cross; not, indeed, as implying any original implacableness of his nature, but only an obstacle to the exercise of forgiving mercy, resulting from the necessity of some decisive testimony of his abhorrence of sin, which necessity by the sacrifice of Christ is removed. Such being the doctrine of the cross, I proceed to show—

II. How this doctrine to them that are saved is the power of God.

"Saved," in this connection, means, primarily, renewed in holiness. The comparison is between the doctrine of the cross and the wisdom of this world in their effects on character. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? What have they done to turn men from sin? "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" Hath he not exposed it as vain and futile? "For after that the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe." This is meeting the adversaries of the gospel on their own ground. They insist that the doctrine of the cross relaxes moral obligation,—that the pretense of turning men from sin by the proclamation of a free pardon is absurd,—that the supposition of God's making his beloved Son a substitute for the guilty in the suffering of death, for purposes of moral government, is foolishness. No, says the apostle, facts prove the contrary. Go where you will,—over the Jewish world or the pagan,—in the path of the preaching of the cross, and you will find it to those who yield themselves to its appropriate influence, the power of God. In its effects on character you will see incontestible evidence that this foolishness of God is wiser than men, and this weakness of God is stronger than men.

Yet the apostle could not have meant to say, that the doctrine of the cross is effectual to this end without the Holy Spirit, or, which is *the same thing* in a modern form, that this doctrine, *being given by the Holy* Spirit, is itself the only divine power

designated in the Scriptures under that name; for in this very epistle, he expressly distinguishes the word of the Spirit from the person of the Spirit, and asserts that the former without the latter—the preaching the cross without the direct influence of God upon the mind—is ineffectual. Though Paul plant and Apollos water, all is vain without the Spirit's inworking.

But, on the other hand, Paul speaks of the gospel itself as being not inert, but quick and powerful,—not a dead letter, but a living principle,—through the grace of the Holy Spirit opening the mind to receive it, a divine energy,—the divinely adapted and divinely powerful means of raising dead souls to a holy and spiritual life, and of sustaining and strengthening in them that life to their complete and eternal salvation. Nor does he merely say, that the gospel in general, but the doctrine of the cross in particular, is the power of God; the doctrine which points us to the expiatory sacrifice of Christ for justification, is also, on that account, the means of sanctification; the doctrine which alone gives peace to the burdened conscience, gives purity to the believing heart,—the doctrine which offers a free pardon to the vilest of sinners, associates their sins, on their cordially receiving it, with the deepest abhorrence of their souls,—the doctrine which brings to the heart of the very adultress, the accents of a bleeding Saviour, "Neither do I condemn thee," brings to her the warning also of the Almighty Judge, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee." It is the only doctrine which is effectual to this end, and so in contrast with all human schemes of salvation, is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

All this is before the world as historic verity. The doctrine of the cross has been, and is in fact to them that are saved, the power of God. It was such in the days of the apostles. Myriads, where it was preached, in Jewish lands or in pagan, it powerfully convinced sin, and melted in contrition; it made joyful in the knowledge of forgiveness, and turned from all iniquity in love to their great Redeemer; it called out from the world in profession of his name, and emboldened in his cause in the face of persecution; it joined together in firm fellowship, and carried forward triumphant over all opposition in a new and holy life.

In the reformation of the sixteenth century, the same doctrine wrought with the same power. It was this which gave peace to the troubled soul of Martin Luther in the monastery of Erfurt; and which, imparting to him the peace, was also to him the power of God; and through him to many thousands, all over Europe, to whom, by his preaching and his writings, the doctrine came. It is this which stands first among the causes which have given to reformed nations since the elevation which they have possessed; which is the vital principles of the many thousands of evangelical churches in these nations; and, to them that are saved in these churches, is consciously as life from the dead, and through them is spreading light and life into all quar-

ters of the world. Go to listening assemblies, where this doctrine is having its appropriate effect. What is it but the power of God which causes that breathless silence,—that unutterable emotion,—that heart piercing conviction,—that absorbing inquiry,—that obedient surrendering, that joy in God, which force the witnesses of the scene to say, "Surely God is in this place," and to those who gladly receive the word, make the hour the era of a new and holy life? Or what is it but the power of God that constrains so many of the subjects of this grace to break away from their country and friends, that they may convey to the perishing the salvation which they have found; that sustains them in a patient and cheerful prosecution of their work under all privations and sufferings; and that by their means, raises up degraded bushmen and ferocious cannibals into an honorable standing among the enlightened nations of the world? If it is by the power of God that these things are done, it is also by the power of the cross. It is this which directly and consciously operates on the sensibilities and active principles of the soul, quickened by the spirit of life; and to this alone, as connected with the agencies and means of its application, is the effect to be ascribed. The doctrine of the cross, in distinction from other means of moral culture, other schemes of religion, and other doctrines called Christian, is in fact the power of God in the moral renovation of men.

As such is the fact, so it is not difficult to show, from the moral constitution of men, that such is the appropriate result. The doctrine of the cross peculiarly is adapted to the effect:—

1. Revealing God as having united himself to our nature, and for our salvation, it brings him near. No need have we of the sensible forms and gorgeous rites of pagan or papal idolatry,—no need of the symbols of the ancient dispensation, the shechinah, the mercy-seat, the temple,—to bring out the Eternal from the secrecy of his invisible abode, make him present to our apprehensions, or impress us with his personal agency around and within us, or his claims to our affection and worship. Standing around the cross, and believing in him who hangs bleeding there as "very God and very man," and seeing him thence ascending, consecrated by sufferings, as "the author of eternal salvation to all those that obey him," it is not difficult for us to feel that he is near us, and mindful of us, that he condescends to our mean estate, though offended at our sin; and that with him is our great concern, and with the invisible God in and through him.

2. Revealing the holiness of God, and vindicating the claims of his law, it rouses the conscience, and convinces of sin. It was not for creatures of a day, nor for unoffending subjects of God, nor for sinners but slightly guilty, that Christ, the Son of God, died an atoning sacrifice. No! if Christ died for all, then were all dead; and every bleeding wound and dying groan proclaims to every living man, that all things here are infinitely insignifi-

cant in comparison with an interest in his redemption. For if these things were done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry? If God would forgive sin through no inferior sacrifice; if he who was in the form of God, and counted it no robbery to be equal with God, must have made himself of no reputation, and taken the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death, that penitent sinners might be forgiven,—then sin is no light thing in the view of God; then is our God not only a loving Father but a righteous Judge; then can no riches of his goodness secure to favor those whom justice demands for punishment; and then will the punishment of those who die in impenitence, under the guilt of rejecting his grace, superadded to that of refusing his authority, be alike certain and dreadful.

3. Revealing the forgiving mercy of God, in harmony with his punitive justice, it pacifies the conscience and melts the hearts of those who cordially believe in it. It brings them to the throne of grace, confessing their sins; assures them that he who gave his Son to die for them when enemies, will not reject them coming to him reconciled; that in pardoning them through his blood, there is no sacrifice of righteousness; that his justice itself has no pleasure in their death, and asks only that the law be sustained in their forgiveness, and that, satisfied with the honor done it in Christ, it sits partner with mercy in forgiving and saving to the uttermost all who come unto God by him. No matter how great is their guilt, no matter how absolute their conscious destitution of righteousness, and their despair of working out any, they are made welcome as though they were like the angels; for the righteousness of God is unto and upon all them that believe, with no difference. And this it is that melts the heart while it tranquillizes the conscience,—dissolves it in penitence under the sense of sins so great freely forgiven. You have heard the story of the poor ignorant Greenlanders, who, as the missionaries told them of the power and Godhead of the Creator, turned away with stupid indifference; but when pointed to the cross, were softened and subdued. So it is everywhere. The goodness of God leadeth us to repentance; and where is the goodness of God seen as on the cross, pardoning sins so great as to require such an expiation!

Finally,—bringing us into peace with God, awakening delight in him, and gratitude to him, it transforms us after his image. We love him because he first loved us. Knowing and believing the love which he hath toward us, we admire what we see, and would be what we admire; we love as we are loved; we forgive as we are forgiven; the same mind is in us which was in Christ Jesus. We look not every one on his own things, but every one also on the things of others, and very specially on the condition of lost souls, and desire their fellowship with us in the great salvation. "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them and rose again."

In conclusion, I remark,—

1. The doctrine of the atonement is fundamental in the Christian system. The preaching of this doctrine is indispensable to the preaching of the gospel, and belief in it, to believing unto salvation. Preaching Christ merely as our teacher, or as our example, or as sealing his testimony with his own blood, or as the brightest manifestation of the love of God, is not preaching the cross, and will not answer the end of the preaching of the cross. It will not save men. It may move the sensibilities, but it will not awaken the conscience or subdue the will. Nor will it heal the wounds of the contrite, or enthrone Christ in hearts devoted to the world. Jesus died, and died for us. He who was in the form of God, and counted it no robbery to be equal with God, took upon him our griefs and carried our sorrows; he whose throne is forever and ever, and whom all the angels of God do worship, took part with us in flesh and blood, that through death he might save us from death. This is the only doctrine that can at once awaken and tranquillize the conscience; subdue and constrain the will; produce in souls alienated from God the images of his holiness, and through them reproduce in others the same images to his glory. Ye who would be saved, ye who feel the power of sin, and are striving in vain for deliverance, hearken to him who from the cross proclaims, "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." That is the only object, the view of which can change the slave into a child,—the rebel into a friend.

2. The doctrine of the cross is a doctrine of great simplicity. Christ died for us. He died for our sins,—the just for the unjust. He redeemed us by his blood,—redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. Such is the doctrine as it lies in the Scriptures. A child may understand it, though it involves relations into which angels look. The child, whose heart is opened to it, does understand it, and feels its power; so does the Greenlander and Hottentot, and is saved by it,—weeps and prays, and hopes, and loves, and rejoices, in the light of the glory of God, which shines upon him from it. But men have adopted other forms of statement. They have said that our sins were imputed to Christ,—that he was punished for them,—that he suffered the wrath of God on account of them,—that he suffered the curse of the law in our stead,—that his sufferings and death were the penalty of the law for our sins,—that he suffered and died to satisfy divine justice,—to satisfy and cancel the penal demands of the law. By such forms men would explain what God has not explained, or would distinguish their own views, the one from the other, of what they suppose that he has revealed. Doubtless some, even all these may be understood in accordance with the doctrine as it lies in the Scriptures; but they may be, and sometimes are, understood in a way that corrupts and perverts it; and this at least is certain, that whatever is peculiar to

them is not the power of God in saving those who hold to it, as is demonstrable from the fact, those who are saved are not agreed in them. Luther, and Baxter, and Edwards, in preaching the doctrine, employed different forms of statement, while they all preached the doctrine itself; and to themselves, and those who heard them, it was the power of God.

Brethren, how peculiarly it becomes us as preachers of the cross, proclaiming our own dependence on the infinite sacrifice, to be tolerant towards each other, united in the same faith, differ though we may in cherished forms of statement; and the more especially, since it is not by any doctrinal belief or doctrinal preaching, without its appropriate influence in our hearts, that we shall ourselves be saved, or can expect to save others. The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. It has not been by any merely verbal statements made with logical exactness, settled in councils, inscribed on parchments, and deposited in ecclesiastical archives, that the doctrine of the cross has come down to us through generations buried in dust; but it has been through souls, in all these generations, made alive to God and the concern of salvation by its power; and it must be by our own experience of that power, "working in us mightily," if, when we lie sleeping in dust, it will have saved us, and, through us, been transmitted to those who will succeed us, and spread abroad for the salvation of a dying world. The doctrine is important,—is indispensable as the medium of communication with its object—the true doctrine of the cross, and not another under the name; but woe to us if we rest in the doctrine; if we look not through the doctrine to the object, if we communicate not with it in the deep sympathies, and fervent aspirations, and applications of our inner man; if we give it not its appropriate place in our hearts; if we live not upon it, the life of godliness; if it be not in us, in the matter of our salvation, the power of God.

My brethren, it is a blessed privilege to be preachers of the cross,—to dwell around the cross, as David desired, like the priests of old time, to dwell always in the house of the Lord,—but to be also living examples of the efficacy of the cross, and preachers of it in churches, where, through us, its efficacy is conspicuous; and in view of what it has wrought in ourselves and in these, to be able to say to a perishing world,—See what it has done! to us who are saved it is the power of God,—to what higher blessedness could a sinful mortal aspire?

Brethren, I am happy to meet you on this occasion. Almost all whom I used to greet in these fraternal assemblings are gone. In the prospect of soon following them, I rejoice to know that the preaching of the cross will not cease, but, as it is now shedding heavenly glory over benighted nations, so, at no distant period, *it will* be known and acknowledged, by all our perishing race, as *the power of God unto salvation*—Amen.

SERMON XVIII.

GOD'S VOICE TO THE NATION.*

BY REV. A. B. VAN ZANDT,
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"Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?"—ISAIAH ii. 22.

The world has nothing to fear from any degree of influence which the ministry may attain, and the cry of priestcraft will become obsolete, or at least unmeaning, so long as the Pulpit is confined to its legitimate themes. The sacred office was forever dissevered from the strifes of politics and of parties, by that declaration of the Master at the bar of Pilate: "My kingdom is not of this world." Fully asserting his regal character, he yet exalted his mission, and the mission of his ambassadors, far above the petty conflicts of a secular ambition. Preferring himself the crown of thorns to the imperial diadem, and the robes of sepulture to the robes of state, he has also taught us, from the standpoint of his cross, to look down upon all the factitious distinctions of life, and to regard all mankind alike, as sinners to be saved or lost. The end of his coming into the world, and the end of our office, have respect to man as a spiritual being. We are called to study the diversities of his temporal condition, only as they bear upon his present character and his eternal prospects. And though not blind to the essential differences among men, yet unswayed by these, our faith must equally discern beneath the tinsel of rank, the insignia of power, and the rags of beggary, a guilty immortal spirit. The high argument of that spirit's loss and recovery carries us far beyond and above the range of topics suited to the Senate and the Forum; and instead of aiming to concentrate and sway popular opinion upon the agitating questions of human interest and policy, it is the office of the Pulpit to withdraw the minds of men to the transcendent interests of eternity, to the thoughts of God, and to the sublime economy of Redemption.

Our own country is a happy illustration of the truth, that governments have least to fear from clerical interference or priestly usurpation, when the pulpit is left to the free and untrammelled exercise of its functions. It is where the Church has been drawn into an unholy alliance with the State; where it has been degra-

* A sermon occasioned by the death of Zachary Taylor, President of the United States.

ded into a mere appendage to temporal power ; or has ingloriously consented to be subsidized by and dependent upon governmental patronage, that with the loss of its spiritual and heaven-born dignity, it has sought to cover itself with the robes of secular power, and the tinsel of earthly aggrandizement. Yet, even then, the degradation which would hide itself beneath the unseemly habiliments of external grandeur, has been induced in the first instance by the encroachments of the civil upon the ecclesiastical power, and not by any inherent tendencies in the latter. With all due allowance for that personal ambition, from which even the purest minds are not exempt, and the influence of which has always been felt upon the ministry, as well as upon all other classes of men, yet the desire "to be the greatest" never would have drawn the sacred office as a party into the arena of political strife, but for the seductive influences of the State itself, alternately bribing and coercing the Church to a participation in her conflicts. The mitre had never been joined with the sceptre, but that the regal first laid its hand upon the sacerdotal office, and sought to add another jewel to its crown, by arrogating the prerogative of Christ—the headship of the Church.

It is a history which deserves to be studied by those who would cloak their carnal enmity to the gospel under the witless and worn-out cry of "priestcraft,"—the record of the origin and progress of that hated and hateful union of Church and State. Side by side with that record let them study the relation of these two, which have so long been unjustly regarded as antagonist powers, as that relation exists in our own country. The ministry have here no civil power. Their profession is in many States a disqualification for office. They are nowhere pensioners upon the public purse. Precluded from the hopes of preferment, they have no temptation to a fulsome adulation of the great. Exempt from all civil and secular interference with their office, they need not connive at wickedness in high places, or withhold the sternest sanctions of the truth from any who may come under its rebukes. And yet in no country in the world has the sacred office a more extended and legitimate influence over the people than in this ; whilst, at the same time, we may appeal to facts when we assert, that in no country in the world is it so entirely free from the charge of mingling and meddling in questions foreign to the great end of its institution! Individual exceptions there may be, of those who have mistaken their calling, and have carried into the pulpit the language and spirit of the hustings. But we aver, without fear of contradiction, that in the discharge of its peculiar duties, and the utterance of the simple truths of the Bible, the ministry of this land has thrown around its rulers the surest guarantee of public respect for their persons and offices ; has given to law its strongest hold upon the citizen ; and among conservative influences has been second only to the Gospel which it proclaims.

If we thus magnify our office, it is to dispel the prejudices of those whose unwarranted and injurious suspicions are a barrier to the entrance of the truth. But whilst on the one hand thus fully conceding its limitations, on the other hand the occasion requires us to assert for the Pulpit a wider range of discussion than some are willing to allow. Its utterances are not to be confined to a few familiar and fundamental truths. Neither the teachings of the Master, the example of the Apostles, nor the spirit and design of our office, require us to be silent upon the moral and religious aspects of the great questions and events which may agitate communities and nations. Religion claims, and was designed to extend, a healthful influence over man in every stage of his history, and in all the relations of life. She greets with her blessing his entrance into the world, and clusters around the cradle of his infancy the associations and the hopes of an immortal life. She is charged with the culture and discipline of his youthful powers. She meets him at the opening of the world's active scenes with her monitory voice, and pointing to the highway of sin and folly, strewed with the wrecks of blighted hopes; the while with inspiriting words, she seeks to waken in his soul the noble purpose to tread the path of virtuous endeavor. When man would smooth that rugged path and sweeten its sorows by the endearments of domestic life, Religion lends her sanction to the union of willing hearts, and leaves her benediction on their joys. In the chamber of sickness her presence is the harbinger of hope. She has her consolation for the hour of trial, and beside the bed of death she whispers the name of Jesus and the resurrection. But preparing him thus for his duties and his destiny, Religion has also her lesson for man as a citizen. Hers is the true philosophy which unfolds the origin and the nature of the social compact. From the fountains of unerring truth, she declares the just authority of governments, and the relations of the governed. Enforcing upon rulers a due sense of solemn responsibility, she enforces equally upon the ruled the maxims of a loyal obedience to the laws, and upon all a constant recognition of Him, who rules among the nations, and whose Providence none can withstand.

An occasional recurrence to topics like these, with a view to impress upon the public mind a sense of Divine government, and the mutual obligations of men to each other, based upon their higher obligations to God, is not only within the province, but imperatively incumbent upon the ministry. Nor is this exhibition of ministerial prerogative and duty at all foreign to the present occasion, or to the scope of the text. In proportion as Religion and its teachings on any subject are neglected, the wisdom of the world is substituted for the truth of God; an undue reliance is placed upon an arm of flesh; and men become so far practical atheists in the world. The first step in the progress of error, is a neglect of the truth; then come in the maxims of a false philosophy, when the doctrines of the Word are forgotten.

and the defection is complete, when unbelief has thus gathered strength and courage to deny what none have been zealous to maintain. The most pestiferous notions in morals and in politics have thus gained to themselves form and currency in the world. Your modern philosopher, whether in science, or ethics, or government, takes his place at first beside the Bible, not to oppose, but to supplement its teachings. His nostrums find a ready market, under the received impression that there is no balm in Gilead: and when the poison has well diffused itself, and worked its way down through the varied ranks of society, if it is at length discovered that God *has* spoken, and his Word conflicts with the deductions of a shallow but specious logic, behold! too often error triumphs over truth, and the conjectures of man outweigh the sure Word of inspiration. The Bible indeed is not a detailed system of philosophy, and it was not designed to be a treatise on political economy. But it is a grand system of *truth*, in which are revealed all the principles which are necessary to regulate all the diversified relations and duties of mankind. Our times especially demand that those principles should be brought out. And in a day when novel theories of government are rife; when the flowing and refluent wave of revolution is mingling thrones and dynasties and republics in promiscuous ruin; and when amid the din of factions and conflicts of arms the hoarse voice of anarchy is heard clamoring for the overthrow, with the pretext of reconstructing society; it is befitting that the voice of God should also be heard,—his word interpreting his Providence, and, in the failure of human schemes, in the disasters and judgments attendant upon human presumption and folly, saying, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils." It is time we were made to understand, that verily there is a God who ruleth in the earth; and that people and rulers alike were found humbly inquiring at his holy oracles.

It cannot be disguised that at this present juncture, the text has a peculiar and solemn significance to us, as a nation. Since the adoption of the Federal Constitution, there has not occurred in the history of this Republic, a period so fraught with peril as the crisis through which we are now passing. That we have successfully encountered other dangers, has served to inspire public confidence in the stability of our institutions; and in the very thickest of the gloom, which has so darkly veiled our prospects of late, we have yet been cheered by the glimmering star of hope. Nevertheless we are persuaded that even now, if we consider well the elements of conflict, and the issues at stake, it is rather the proof of folly than of foresight, to be unconcerned at the aspect of the times. Were the struggle with a foreign power, we might be confident, either in the justice of our cause, or in the brave hearts and strong arms of a united people. Were the question one of party policy, we might commit it to the decision of the ballot-box, and rest secure in the verdict of majorities. But the causes for present alarm are different, and more dangerous than

these. There has been a severing of fraternal ties; a rupture of social affinities; a reckless disregard of national associations and sympathies; a narrowing down of patriotic impulses to the aspirations after a sectional triumph; a mutual jealousy and distrust, and a mutual acerbity of feeling and of language, which if continued must soon be fatal to the existence of a confederated government.

It is ordinarily true, that in a representative State, the rulers reflect the feelings and sentiments of the people. We could hope that at the present juncture our own country is in some degree an exception to the rule. But if the spirit which seems to prevail at the capital of this nation, is to be taken as the exponent of national sentiment, no forms of law, no constitutional provisions, no lingering remains of patriotism can long hold in union interests so discordant, antipathies so inveterate. It is not our purpose to trace to their causes the present distractions of the country, or to sit in judgment upon those who may be supposed to have produced them. We refer to facts as the omens of danger. And the flippancy and unconcern with which men in high places and in low places, have come to speak of that terrible alternative—"disunion," we regard as not the least among the causes of alarm. To predict with certainty the results of such an event, would baffle even the political sagacity of a Burke. But it needs no prophetic gift, to anticipate from it results of great and lasting evil. And though it should be considered as beside our province, yet we will not stifle the impulse or suppress the sentiment, that we do most heartily deprecate such an event, as fraught with disaster to the latest generation! We claim no superior forecast, yet we think that mind must be blinded by passion or prejudice, which can look beyond this consummation which we dread, and not have the field of its vision filled with a record, like the mystic roll of the prophet, "written within and without with mourning, lamentation and woe!"

Now in a crisis like this, and with dangers so appalling, we may garnish the sepulchres of our patriot fathers, and bid the storied marble rise; we may appeal to their kindred blood, mingled on many a battle-field; we may recall their sentiments, their self-devotion, and their sacrifices. And it is well! Let these memorials at least rebuke, if they cannot exalt, the degenerate spirits of their descendants. Here and there perhaps a kindred soul will catch the generous glow of their lofty virtue, and, mindful only of their country and of their country's future, will dare to breast the swelling tide of faction, and, true to the sacred compact of the Constitution, to be nobly great, though it be only in the estimation of the good. Such men we trust there are, and, as the occasion of this discourse reminds us,—such men *there have been!* We look with hope to those who *yet remain. But our* hope can only rise to confidence, when we

look away from them to God! For even they who have gone, though dead, yet speak, and from their honored graves they echo back the admonition of the prophet, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils."

There is a widely prevalent disposition, often rebuked in the Scriptures, to "trust in an arm of flesh, and make a man our hope." This is especially manifest in great public emergencies. As these emergencies often serve to call out the latent energies of some master mind, which seems to ride upon the whirlwind and direct the storm; so when the storm of danger threatens, we are prone to look about us, and fix our thoughts on this one, or on that, as the controlling genius, whose presence and whose power is the harbinger of safety. Thereupon, we demi-deify the man, and exhalt him into the very Jupiter Stator of our hopes. Or if no such divinity can be found, we still sigh for the illustrious dead, and fondly invoke the heroes of a former age, to receive our hero-worship. How fervent and how frequent have been the aspirations of the past year, for a *Washington*, with his wise counsels and his steady hand, to guide our fortunes through the turmoil and the strife of threatened revolution. Such aspirations are no disparagement to any executive incumbent. The name of the Father of his Country knows comparison with none. Pure as he was wise, and good as he was great, "we ne'er shall look upon his like again." But it is time for us as a nation to learn that there is a power more potent than any arm of flesh. And though the hand of a Washington were always upon the helm of State, yet there may be dangers which baffle the pilot's art; there may be storms which no human skill can withstand. And God may permit those dangers to threaten, and may bid those storms to rise, thereby to punish this fond idolatry of man and vindicate the denunciations of his Word.

Perhaps there are no people more prone than we to worship the idol of an hour. When once the popular enthusiasm is aroused in favor of any man, he is, for the time, the embodiment of all excellence, and concentrates upon himself the admiration and the hopes of the nation. Short, indeed may be his reign, and trivial in itself the circumstance which hurls him from his lofty pedestal. Divided too may be the homage, for each party has its shrine. But to one divinity or another all conspire to yield the praise, the trust, the honors, which belong only to God.

"Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's," is a maxim which justifies all due respect to talent, virtue, or office. But render "unto God the things which are God's," equally forbids the forgetfulness of his sovereign authority and government; the exaltation of a creature to the place of the Creator; or in any confidence in man, which is not subordinate to a conscious and constant dependence upon God. There is in this modern apotheosis of individuals an atheistical contempt for Jehovah, which may be well supposed to provoke his displea-

ure. It implies an absence of his fear, and it begets a violation of his law, which cannot fail to bring upon us the severity of his judgments. They are not words without meaning which his Spirit has indited, and the anathema is peculiarly applicable to nations: "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." And though it should be a sentence slow in its fulfilment, yet pronounced by the same authority, it will infallibly be executed: "The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish! yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted." But the lesson of the text is not only taught in those judgments upon a people which are the results of its neglect, but in those events of Divine Providence which reveal the weakness and the frailty of man. Was it only to startle his fears by the constant allusions to his end, that the Bible is filled with such graphic and affecting statements of human frailty? His "breath is in his nostrils"; his "life is a vapor," or the fleeting shadow of a summer cloud. The transcient flower, that unfolds its leaves to display in its gorgeous beauty the careful finish and profuse abundance of Jehovah's works, whilst yet we gaze upon its exquisite form and hue, withers and dies, to teach the gazer's frailty! The prophet of old was commissioned, in accents solemn and sublime, to make a divine communication to the world. And what is this announcement from the throne? Some new principle in philosophy; some panacea for the ills of life; some unexpected transitions of empire? No! in all the awful grandeur of Jehovah's word, it is still the story of human frailty:—"The voice said, Cry! And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass! and the goodliness thereof is as a flower of the field!" In accents more impressive still, God's voice repeats, from time to time, this truth we are slow to learn. Death is the teacher now! and echoes the prophet's words from coffined dust, from open graves, from consecrated urns! He invades the sanctuary of sweet domestic bliss; we mark his ravages in the wide circle of our kindred; "our companions and acquaintanes are turned into darkness;" and before his relentless hand, fall the illustrious victims who have been exalted to the very pinnacle of honor, as if to render more conspicuous their fall.

Recent events are well calculated to leave upon the hearts of this people the deep impression of the truth which we have endeavored to enforce. Amid the agitations of the public mind and the long and anxious struggle still pending at the capital, a star of the first magnitude suddenly fell; a giant intellect was stricken down, in the very arena of debate. The funeral pageant was scarcely over, when another honored son of the same State, and the successor to her greatest, fell, where he had fallen. "God speaketh once, yea, twice, but man regardeth it not." Still raged the war of angry words; still gleamed the lightnings of indignant

eloquence, and muttered the thunders of the coming storm. But now arrives another messenger from a distant court,—he comes charged with an embassy of startling interest,—his mission must be executed with haste; and, regardless alike of courtly etiquette and diplomatic formalities, he rushes at once and unbidden into the presence of our venerated Chief. His tone is imperious, his credentials are indubitable, and his is the Sovereign, whose mandates alone cannot be defied. All the arts of the most skilful diplomacy fail to swerve him from his purpose. In his presence the lips of eloquent Senators are sealed; and the wisdom of profoundest statesmen, and the courage of bravest warriors, can find expression only in silence and in tears: for who can reply to the summons of Death? Ah! 'tis the hand of God! and the brave old warrior, unharmed from many a battle fray, and now exalted to the very pinnacle of honor, yields to the resistless fiat,—as falls at last the brave old oak, upon the mountain's brow, whose brawny arms have wrestled with many a storm! We are not here to rehearse his battles and his victories: the muse of history will do them justice. We are not here to pronounce his eulogium: the task is more appropriate to other hands. But without trenching upon the sacredness of this place, or the spirit of the text, we may yet pause to bestow the tribute of a tear to the memory of a Patriot! For the good which he has done, and for the good which he intended; for his stern integrity, and his undoubted patriotism; for the honor which he has won, and for the office which he held; let his virtues be embalmed, and his name go down to posterity, among those whom his countrymen have delighted to honor! But we stand here to-day, to contemplate the providence of that omnipotent Being, by whom "princes reign, and rulers decree justice." And from the grave of our President, we gather again the lesson of our frailty; we hear again the voice of God, saying, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils."

It will be well for us, as a people, if we so far heed the high and solemn lessons of this event, as that we shall be led devoutly to recognize the providence of that God whom our fathers worshipped; as that we shall cease to build our hopes, exclusively, upon the elevation of certain men to office, or upon the success of certain parties and policies. A strong and well-founded preference for particular men and measures is lawful, as it is unavoidable. But, my hearers, we must learn, and God by his judgments, it would seem, intends to make us know, that the elevation or overthrow of men, the success or failure of measures, and our country's general weal or woe, are entirely in his hands. It is time, then, that we learn in all our ways to acknowledge God; that we are restrained by his fear from the public and shameless violation of his laws; and that our conscious dependence should prompt the humble and hearty prayer for his guidance and blessing, upon our rulers and upon ourselves. And

may we not hope that this event will leave its salutary impression upon the Representatives of the people in Congress assembled; that it will effectually rebuke, and rebuking assuage the bitterness of party and sectional dissensions; that unholy ambition will stand abashed in the presence of Infinite Majesty; and that the ceaseless strife of tongues will at length give place to the strife of mutual endeavors after the public good?

How the highest objects of earthly desire dwindle at the approach of Death; how fade away the glittering appendages of rank and office; how unattractive becomes the utmost goal of a fond ambition! But if the yet unopened grave thus echoes the Preacher's voice, and approaching Death writes "vanity of vanities" upon human hopes; how worthless and how vain must appear all the factitious distinctions of life, when contemplated from eternity. In what light, to the illustrious chief, do his world-renowned victories now appear? What value does he now attach to the hero's laurel, or to the statesman's civic crown? It was not the glory of a Mexican campaign, or the dignity of the highest executive office, but his conscious rectitude of purpose, to which his mind alone reverted in the final struggle. Crowned with the first honor of the first of nations, with the renown of deeds unsurpassed in ancient story, and with a spotless fame; yet of more value than them all, in the dying hour, was the conviction of an honest heart: "I have always done my duty." We would fondly hope that his conceptions of duty were not limited to the faithful discharge of official trusts. Yet even though they were,—Hear it, ye nations' rulers! too often struggling hardest for your private ends, and your personal aggrandizement,—no successes of ambition; no plaudits of a section or a party; no staff of office, though the highest, will impart one ray of comfort to the dying strife! Could we reach your ear, and were ours the power of graphic words, we would paint the coming scene, "the one event," when yourselves should feel the touch of death, and grapple with the fell destroyer: and there beside your dying pillow, should stand the phantom of your fond pursuits; and there the empty robes of rank; and there, if false to your trust, the wages of your iniquity; and there the spectre of your wounded, weeping country; with Conscience thundering in your ears, "I have *not* done my duty."

But a mightier hand has already drawn that scene, in the reality of an event over which the nation mourns. And may we not hope, that many of those to whom its lessons are more especially addressed, have in thought transferred themselves to the sufferer's dying bed; and in the presence chamber of Death solemnly resolved to trample on every unhallowed aspiration, and, sustained by an approving conscience, nobly to sacrifice upon the altar of a pure patriotism, everything but honor? If so, in his death, perhaps more than in his life, the hero and the statesman has subserved his country's good. We honor the spirit which dic-

tated, and we heartily accord with the sentiment so eloquently expressed by a distinguished Senator: "If on the altar of our common country, we can sacrifice the bitterness of party and of sectional feeling—if at this moment, when the heart of a great nation is palpitating with anxiety, we can come to the discharge of the high and solemn duties which devolve upon us, with hearts purified by affliction, in the singleness and sincerity of purpose and in the humility of spirit which become us; this melancholy dispensation of Providence will indeed have been productive of results most salutary to the great interests of the American people." Akin to this is the language of another, who was himself a competitor with the departed for the suffrages of the nation: "It is a solemn appeal, and should be solemnly heard and heeded. His death, whose loss we mourn, will not be in vain, if it tends to subdue the feelings that have been excited, and to prepare the various sections of our country for a mutual spirit of forbearance, which shall insure the safety of all, by the zealous co-operation of all. We could offer no more appropriate nor durable tribute to departed worth, than such a sacrifice of conflicting views upon the altar of our common country." Heaven forbid that these sentiments should evaporate in words! For the political results of this event, we look mainly to its effects in softening and subduing the tone of public feeling and legislative action. If it fails in this, and instead of arresting the angry current which has been sweeping over us, it should serve but as the occasion for intrigue to develop its plans, and faction to fan the fires of internal strife; then, woe! woe! to our country! the glory has departed! the motto upon our national escutcheon must be changed; and "*Ilium fuit*" must be the mournful record of our greatness!

But it were unseemly in this place to contemplate only those lessons of this event, which it addresses to us as citizens. In one point of view indeed, Death has a different aspect, when the victim is distinguished by influence and station, from that which he ordinarily bears. For, besides the sundering of those domestic ties, the rupture of which brings as keen a pang to the most exalted as to the most abject, there is in the one case also the breaking up of political organizations, the transfer of power, and the deep sense of public bereavement, increased by the possible contingencies of the event. But in another point of view, and considered in itself, Death is "the one event," that levels all distinctions, and is the same to all. The mightiest and the meanest, he whose exit is unnoticed as the fall of an autumn leaf, and he around whose bier a nation mourns, alike must meet the destroyer upon the same common terms. Death is, equally to both, the end of their earthly career; the introduction of their immortal spirits into the immediate presence of their Judge, to receive the sentence of irrevocable doom. Be it then a monarch or a beggar, considered in its relation to eternal con-

sequences, it is an event which has no parallel in the revolutions of time,—an event, in either case, the issues of which no tongue can tell, no finite mind conceive. Ah! it is not the position to which we may attain, the height from which we fall, or the circumstances of our descent to the tomb, which invest Death with its importance. It is because life is linked to immortality; because being once begun can never end; and because continued being implies an immortality of suffering or enjoyment, that Death, to whomsoever it may come, is the event unparalleled in its issues.

In this aspect let us view it. Let those eternal issues enter into our estimate of Death, and let them control our choice, in the governing objects and pursuits of life. Let us "cease from man," alike as our dependence, and as the source of our enjoyments; and, contemplating the wreck of human greatness, and the end of human ambition, in the death of him who had reached an eminence, beyond which there was no higher to be hoped for or desired, let us ponder anew the emphatic interrogatory of Christ. "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul; or what shall he give in exchange for his soul?"

THE HEAVEN OF THE BIBLE.

Reason is the chief faculty in putting us in possession of our knowledge of God. As the understanding receives the rays of knowledge which fall upon it from every quarter, like so many sunbeams, Reason compares them one with another—discerns their agreement, or difference, and makes its various inferences from them.

Light shines upon us from a thousand sources concerning the character and government of God. We see him in the countless wonders of nature and providence. We reason from one class of facts to another. We judge what must be the character of such a being as God, from the facts we have ascertained concerning him. And from all we have learned about him from other quarters, we come necessarily to certain conclusions concerning the character of the final abode we believe he has provided for his people.

We cannot doubt, for example, its boundless splendor, from the fact that even in this sinful world, we see such an exhibition of God's glory. We doubt not its holiness, from what we have elsewhere learned of the purity of God. We doubt not its perfect exemption from every evil, reasoning from the benevolence of God, which we cannot question must have a complete development in such a world, wiping off all tears from all faces.

And we actually find the heaven of the Bible answering all the just demands of an enlightened reason on this point. Our sober judgment cannot array before us one item in the account of what such a world would provide for a rational being, but we shall find that item, either a precisely stated fact, or a matter of fair inference from some other fact. We can have no conception of anything that contributes to the dignity and happiness of moral beings, that is not included in the Bible account of heaven. And we can make no fair inference from the elsewhere revealed character of God, or from the nature and wants of man, concerning what heaven should be, but we shall find it *implied* in the actual revelation made by the Scriptures of that blessed world.—*Evangelist.*

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SERMON XIX.

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THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of domnation.—JOHN v. 28, 29.

IN preaching from these words—the doctrine of "the resurrection of the body"—a difficulty may have to be met, arising from the probable general belief in it, by most, if not all of those who hear me, without having entered very minutely into its details, or investigated closely the arguments which have been urged against it. And thus anything like an extended argument on such a generally admitted subject may seem to many to be tedious and unnecessary.

Nevertheless, there are some points needing study and explanation, when we enter into these details;—and some very plausible and ingenious arguments have been urged against it, not only in former times, but of late, and in our own community;—not only by some who strenuously oppose all miracles, and deny even the resurrection of Christ,—but by other more serious and excellent men, who held mainly to the doctrines of Emanuel Swedenborg.

These last forms of opposition to the generally received doctrine include two points:—First, the alleged unreasonableness of the resurrection of the body, and the asserted failure of its advocates to show its truth from the Scriptures; and secondly, the affirmed want of evidence for a future fixed day of judgment, as being connected with the doctrine of the resurrection of the body in the common belief of those who embrace it.

They who engage in this opposition, argue that the resurrection of the dead is continually going on—as individuals die, each one rising immediately from the grave in a spiritual body; and that the judgment also is continually progressing, —every one, with all the nations of the world, being virtually before Christ now, and tried by the manner in which all and each treat the gospel, and that all, and each, at death, go away into everlasting punishment, or into life eternal.

In answer to such positions, it will be my endeavor to show in this discourse:—

First.—That the bodies of the dead shall be raised.

Secondly.—That this resurrection of their bodies is consistent with reason.

Thirdly.—That it will occur at a future appointed time.

Fourthly.—That this time will be connected with a future appointed judgment.

To these topics,—the fact—the reasonableness—the time—and the connections of the resurrection of the body with the religious uses of the doctrine,—I affectionately ask your attention.

I. In affirming that the bodies of the dead shall be raised, we assume, what we think is very evident from the Scriptures, that the soul exists in a spiritual state immediately after death —a state adapted to its moral charcter, and not improbably in a spiritual form. Therefore, Christ said to the dying thief, "To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise:" and narrated of the rich man, that he died, and was buried, and in hell (*i. e.* the place of departed souls,) "lifted up his eyes, being in torment."

We hold, further, that this state will be final, but not consummated,—the beginning of an endless life—the budding of a process growing and reaching at last its more developed state, at the time of the resurrection and the judgment.

1. In evidence of the fact that the bodies of the dead shall be raised, we have, first, the text of which one of the most ingenious opposers of the resurrection of the body has been constrained to say,—"This is undoubtedly the strongest passage in the New Testament in favor of the common view of the resurrection, and one in respect to which it becomes us seriously to guard against any undue bias, from theoretical promptings, to wrest it from its true-meant design." (Bush.)

If we guard against undue bias, certainly it is difficult to conceive how any other meaning can be drawn from it, than that the bodies of the dead shall, in some sense and form, be summoned from their sepulchres by the voice of Christ. For it is not merely the dead of whom it is declared that they shall hear his voice; but "all who are in the graves." And, by the very terms of the theory of those who deny that in any reasonable sense our bodies rise,—the spiritual bodies which

they affirm do rise at the time of death, cannot with any propriety be affirmed to be "in the graves." But Christ declared, "the hour is coming, when all who are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth!" It seems impossible to invent a form of words more directly adapted to express the idea of bodies, once buried, raised from the grave.

2. Secondly.—In all the cases of translation to heaven, or raising from the dead, recorded in the Bible, the body is affirmed to have been translated or raised. (Or, these facts are affirmed of the body.)

In the Old Testament, when Enoch saw not death, but was taken of God; when Elijah was taken from earth, in the chariot of fire; when the dead man was brought to life on touching the bones of the prophet; and in the New Testament, when Jairus' daughter was raised to life again by the power of the Redeemer; when the widow of Nain had her son restored to her, from the biar on which they were carrying him to the grave; when at the voice of Jesus, crying with a loud voice, "Lazarus come forth," he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes; when, at the crucifixion (of Christ) "many bodies of saints which slept, arose and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and appeared unto many;"—(MATT. xxvii. 52, 53;)—when of Jesus himself, it was said to the women by the angels clothed in white, "he is not here, he is risen;" and in that sublime discription of the resurrection given by the apostle Paul to the Thessalonians, when they "which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them ('the dead in Christ') in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air:"—(1 Thess. iv. 17:)—in all and in each of these cases, the bodies of the dead are affirmed to have been raised, either in flesh and blood, still to continue, for a season, in this present world, or in a glorified, spiritual form, that they might at once inherit the kingdom of God, as flesh and blood cannot do.

Reasoning, therefore, from what has been to what shall be, and using only the same form of words to express the resurrection of the dead which shall arise, that the Scriptures use in asserting the resurrection of those who have been raised,—we can come to no other reasonable conclusion, than that the bodies of the dead shall come forth (from their graves,) at the voice of Christ.

3. There are, thirdly, a number of expressions used in Scripture, respecting the resurrection, which cannot be fairly explained except on the theory that the body shall be raised.

a. Thus Christ, on one occasion, drew a motive from the inability of men to kill the soul, to urge his disciples not to fear their ability to kill the body only: exhorting them rather to fear him, who, after he had killed, had power to destroy both soul and body in hell. Does not this imply that the body ex-

ists after death, as truly as the soul, and therefore that it is raised in the resurrection?

b. When he spoke of his own resurrection, he referred to that of his body, saying, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." But the Evangelist adds: "He spoke then of the temple of his body."—JOHN ii. 19, 21.

c. The manner in which the terms, "raise the dead," and other similar phrases, are used in the Scriptures, clearly implies the resurrection of the body.

When Christ said to his disciples, "heal the sick, raise the dead, and cast out devils," (Matt. x. 8,) certainly the idea is, that their bodies shall be raised. The same is true of those messages he sent to John the Baptist, as answers to his inquiry: "Art thou he that should come?" "The deaf hear, the dead are raised." (Matt. xi. 5; Luke vii. 22.) And when Paul writes to the Thessalonians, in a passage already cited, that "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first;" and then adds, "we which are alive shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet them in the air," can he mean anything other than that the bodies of all shall arise?

Indeed, if all those texts applicable only to the resurrection, in which these words "raise," "raised," with their otheir derivatives, are used, be compared with the great number of cases in which the same verb is used in the gospel, with respect to other things, it will be very clear that the meaning must be, that in some sense and form, the bodies once buried shall arise.

The very term "resurrection" itself, although it is affirmed to suggest only, as usual in Scripture, the idea of "revivescence," or restoration to life, yet, taken in connction with such passages as have been already cited, cannot well mean anything less than the raising up again of that which was laid in the grave, and which must refer, if it has any appropriate meaning, to the resurrection of the body that was recumbent in the tomb.

What pensive mourner, or serious stranger, as he walks in the silent shades of that still resting-place for the dead, near our city, would not think, as he passed by that simple but well-conceived monument of plain granite, and read upon its base the single, but immpressive word, "Resurgemus," (we shall rise again,) would not spontaniously associate it with the thought of the resurrection, in some form, of the sleeping dust beneath?

4. But, leaving verbal criticism, we conclude our review of the direct scriptural evidence for the resurrection of the body, by remarking, that this doctrine best explains those very frequent declarations of scripture, which attribute the resurrection of the dead to the special and almighty power of God.

Thus Paul affirms of Christ, that "he shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his own glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." (Philipp. iii. 21.) It is recorded as one of the special prerogatives of God, that he "quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were." (Rom. iv. 17.) And the apostle, in his epistle to the Ephesians, writes of "the exceeding greatness of God's power, to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead. (Eph. i. 19, 20.)

There can be no doubt, that in the bare rising of a spiritual body, from the fleshly one, destroyed by death, without any special accompanying circumstances, silently and unobserved, there would be, as in the operation of many similar natural laws, a strong and interesting illustration of the power of God. But, such an event, great and glorious as it would intrinsically be, would fail to meet and answer to those remarkably strong expressions and descriptions used and given in the Bible touching the resurrection of the dead. How inadequately would it correspond, for example, with those short but sublime words of the apostle Paul: "Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed!" (1 Cor; xv. 51, 52.)

Such expressions convey to every mind something more than the silent fulfillment of an ordinary law of nature. They imply a special act; an act so mysterious and so grand, that it is done in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and is at once announced and accompanied by the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God.

Such an act is not met by the theory of a silent, unobserved rising of the dead. It implies wonder as well as power; and a rapidity of execution, and a sublimity of accompanying events, only in keeping with such ideas as are awakened by Jesus, in the text, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth!"

II. But to all this scriptural evidence for the final resurrection of the bodies of the dead, it is objected: first, that it is unreasonable and unphilosophical; secondly, that no one can presume to contend that the same *particles* once buried shall rise again: and thirdly, that it fails to meet the analogy of the dying grain of wheat used by Paul, as he treated of the resurrection, in his epistle to the Corinthians.

1. On the first point—its unreasonableness—the utter absurdity is alleged, of our even imagining that parted limbs and

empty frames shall be ever seen, literally, flying through the air, each to meet its proper body, and its former soul. And the imaginings of poetry are cited to enhance the grossness of the thought, in the words of one, who, in the description of the last day, has sung :—

"Now charnels rattle ; scattered limbs, and all
The various bones, obsequious to the call,
Self-moved, advance ; the neck perhaps to meet
The distant head ; the distant head, the feet.
Dreadful to view, see, through the dusky sky,
Fragments of bodies in confusion fly ;
To distant regions journeying there to claim
Deserted member and complete the frame."*

* See Bush's work.

2. The second objection urges that it is impossible to conceive that the same particles which once composed the buried body, rise ; since science teaches us, beyond all reasonable doubt, that they have mingled with their kindred dust, and entering into vegetation have united with the rank grass of the sepulchre ; and even through varied and traceable combinations have become incorporated with the flesh of other animals, and possibly, yea, even probably, in some cases, with that of man himself.

3. And then, in the third objection, it is argued, that we cannot adduce any good evidence that there is any living germ of life, in the decaying body of man, after the spirit has left it; and therefore we cannot reasonably maintain that the dead body shall spring up as Paul affirmed the wheat or other product grew from its dying grain ; because in that grain, though it did die, there was a living germ, untouched by decay—and we have no evidence of such a germ in the buried body.

1. To the first of these objections, we reply, that it forms no part of our doctrine of the resurrection. The same Bible that teaches us the reality of this great event, has also taught us, that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." And therefore we have no idea whatever that parted limbs and frames shall ever literally fly, in the resurrection, each to its appropriate body and soul.

2 The second objection—which affirms that the same particles of matter that composed the body cannot rise, because they have mingled with other bodies after death ; and even while living changed, as science has taught us, once in every seven years ; we affirm to be strongly in favor of the resurrection of the body.

For, the fact that even while living, the particles of the frame of every one change repeatedly in the course of his life; so that, as it respects the mere substance of which he is composed, the man of thirty is an entirely changed being from the youth of eighteen, shows indisputably, that personal identity

does not consist in a body composed of the same particles of matter, but in a form assumed from ever-varying and distinct particles, by the inward spirit of a man, acting according to its own laws of organization, ordained of God.

So that, as the wheat, or any other grain, by which the apostle illustrated the reality of the resurrection, consisted of particles wholly different from the blade, and ear, and full corn in the ear, which sprung from its decaying body, and lifting the earth, took for its sustenance and changing form, the rain, and dew, and air of heaven—at once another, and yet the same, (*alter et idem,*) so also the resurrection body, though it consist not of precisely the same particles once laid in the grave, may yet be as truly the body which once enveloped the soul according to the laws of its organization, ordained of God—as the blade, and ear, and corn in the ear, have a body at once another, yet the same with the grain once sown. And thus the process of the apostle if met and realized: "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." (1st Cor. xv. 42–44.)

3. To all this, the third objection alleges the difficulty, that in the dying grain of wheat, there was a germ of life, which was from the first unaffected by destruction; that there was thus in it a continuance of life, in the midst of death; established and sustained by the power of that God who "beautifully mingles life and death;" but there is no evidence of any such germ in a dead and decaying human body.

To this I reply, first, in the words of Scripture, that "the body without the spirit is dead;" and again it is recorded of one whom Christ raised from the dead, that "her spirit came again, and she arose straightway," (Luke viii. 55.) And also of the son of the widow of Zarephath raised by Elijah, that the prophet "cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord, my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived," (1 Kings, xvii. 21, 22.)

From such passages, are we not *warranted* in believing that the SOUL, or spirit of man, is the germ, from which his body shall receive life? That the soul, like the germ of the grain, or plant, or flower, at the appointed time, and by the command of God, who "quickeneth the dead, and calleth the things that be not, as though they were," shall take to itself from the surrounding elements, the very materials, it may be, of which its former body was composed, however scattered they may have been by distance, or by time, and, like the grain that grows into the blade, and ear, and corn, form to itself, agreeably to the law of its organization, a body, in the words of the apostle, "changed," from corruptible to incorruptible—from mortal

to immortality—yet the same? God giving it such a body as it pleased him. Indeed, who shall say, on the very principles urged against our doctrine, by our opponents themselves, that the particles of the bodies of the dead having all been long since mingled into innumerable other bodies, of either animals or plants, and mixed with the waters of the sea, or dust of the earth, and been scattered by the four winds of heaven, it may be into far distant lands from the place in which they originally laid—who shall say that these very elements into which they have been changed, may not be conveying them, as the down of the thistle bears its seed, to the very spirit which is hereafter to assume them as its clothing? Already the stormy wind, fulfilling God's word, may be bearing on its wings the elements of resurrection bodies to their destined use!

Surely, that God, in virtue of whose mysterious natural law the magnet, dropped in the sands, causes the grains which it affects, to assume positions agreeably to their respective polarity, can cause the immortal spirit so to affect the elements that surround it, as to clothe itself with its final spiritual body.

I say, its *final* spiritual body, because the suggestions now made, founded, as we have seen them to be, on plain declarations in the word of God, showing the necessity of the presence of the spirit to give vitality to the body, afford, I think, when compared with some other passages, reasonable ground for another, to say the least, probable conclusion, namely, that as Christ said to the dying thief, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise;" and of the rich man, that after "he died, and was buried, he lifted up his eyes, being in torment;" and specially as Moses and Elias appeared to the awe-struck disciples on the mount of transfiguration, conversing with Christ; we are warranted in conceiving, that in the intermediate state of departed souls—between death and the general resurrection—they may assume bodies suited to that state, which, like the stem, and the leaf, and the bud, before the flower has blown in all the richness of its beauty, wait the power when, at the voice of Christ, and for the purposes of the judgment, and the final state of rewards and punishments, they shall resume the bodies in which they dwelt on earth, now changed, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump;" the corruptible putting on incorruption—the mortal, immortality?

Why then should it be thought a thing incredible with us, that God should raise the dead? (Acts xxvi. 8.) Are we not warranted in saying, that the resurrection of the body is as philosophical as it is scriptural? Has not enough been said to show, that God can make—and may be even now making—the rank grass moaning in the melancholy breezes, over the obscurest grave: the very animals that may crop it, or the birds that may consume its seeds, vehicles to bear to their destined

uses, the bodies of the buried dead? In this view, as well as in others, according to the words of our Savior, in immediate connection with the text: "The hour is coming, and *now is*, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live!" (Ver. 25.)

III. The next two parts of our subject: the time of the resurrection, and its connection with the last judgment, are so closely and necessarily connected with the fact and the reasonableness of the resurrection of the body—they may be said to be so dependent, as consequents, upon these, that we shall need to consider them but briefly.

1. A future, appointed time for the resurrection, is specified by our Saviour in the text. "The hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice." The apostle Paul fairly and fully implies the same truth, when he writes in the future tense: "Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." It is the future tense; not the trumpet *is* sounding; but the trumpet *shall* sound, and the dead *shall* be raised.

2. That the last judgment will be connected with this future and fixed time for the resurrection, is also implied by Jesus, in the text. "They that are in the graves shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." The awards of life and damnation, we know, are ever declared in the Scriptures, to be the results of that last judgment, in which the son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, and shall sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and when, after having separated them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats, he shall say to "them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:" and "unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." (Matt. xxv. 41—46.)

In strict accordance with this time of future judgment, as being connected with the resurrection of the bodies of the just and of the unjust, (Acts xxiv. 15,) is Paul's declaration to the men of Athens, in immediate connection with his preaching to them the resurrection of the dead, that God "hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordained: whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." (Acts xvii. 31.)

And is there not a congruity, let me ask, before leaving

these points, in this resumption of their raised bodies by departed souls, and these results of the judgment, with the proceedings of a holy government, and our own moral feelings?

Does it not seem just and proper, that, being judged, and rewarded, and condemned, for the deeds done in the body, should appear in the body, before the judgment seat? May it not be really necessary for them in entering both into the blessedness of the righteous, and the punishment of the wicked, to have intercourse with things outward, and with other beings, whether in heaven or in hell, though raised and spiritual bodies, adapted in their qualities to their respective states?

So strongly indeed have such considerations commended themselves to the opposers of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, and of judgment yet to come,—from whom the objections to them considered in this discourse, have been principally taken, that even he has said, in words which I quote from his treatise on the subject:—"We do not question, that ends worthy of infinite wisdom may dictate the ordainment of some grand crisis in the moral history of the universe, for the purpose of *revealing*—of *making manifest*—in some illustrious way, the righteous *grounds* of a judgment already passed. Nor, as we have before intimated, do we see anything incongruous in the idea, that the word of inspiration may be so framed as to create the impression that both the resurrection and the final award may concentrate themselves to this great epoch, simply from the fact that their *realized results* shall then be more signally divulged to all orders of intelligences."* But, if the "word of inspiration be so framed as to create this impression," is it not the *true* impression,—the most important impression? And must not whatever other views we may arrive at, respecting a spiritual body, and a judgment of any kind, carried on in any sense, in this world, preparatory to that which is to come, be wholly incidental and subordinate to the first impression made by the word of God?

IV. The religious uses of the truth we have considered are many and various. We can now attend only to those which seem most important and appropriate.

I. The resurrection of our bodies is ever represented in the Scriptures as resulting from the resurrection and power of Christ, and as connected with his work.

It is through Christ that men *shall* rise. He has risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that sleep. Not in the sense that he was, literally, the first being who, in any form, rose from the dead, but that it is through his power, as one with the Father, that any have risen or shall rise. It is with reference to his work of redemption, and on account of it, that the doors of death and the grave have been opened for any.

*Bush, on the resurrection, p. 278, chap. ix.

He has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light. It is to meet him as judge, that our bodies shall rise. Of his resurrection, the apostles were ordained to be the witnesses. This, in the beginning of the proclamation of the Gospel, with its necessarily associated truths, was the great theme of their preaching. They founded the divine truth of his religion on the fact. It still rests on that fact. No one can deny it, even though he be a professed preacher of the Gospel, without proclaiming another gospel than that which Paul preached unto men.

The testimony of Jesus, therefore, is the spirit of this, as of all other parts of prophecy. In this, as in all other parts, we know nothing save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. It is through faith in him alone, that we can be prepared to meet death or rise to judgment. For "the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

2. The resurrection, too, is ever represented in the Scriptures as at once a motive and, an illustration of that spiritual rising from the death of sin, to the life of holiness required in the Gospel.

It was, in speaking of this spiritual renovation, absolutely needful in all and every one, that our Saviour was led to utter the text. And he said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." And then he added—as if intentionally combining the spiritual and bodily resurrection, as mutually illustrating one another—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." (vs. 24, 25.)

It is with reference to this view, the righteous are said in the Scriptures to rise in a peculiar sense—a sense in which the wicked do not. Thus our Saviour is recorded in the Gospel of Luke, as having spoken to the Saducees, who questioned him of the resurrection, that they might entrap him, of those "who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead." (Luke, xx. 35.) And it is in this sense, probably, that the apostle Paul affirmed to the Philippians, that he counted all things but dung, and suffered the loss of all things, that he might know Christ, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death; if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. (Philip. iii. 8-11.)

Enough is said in the Bible, to show that the wicked as well as the righteous, the unjust as well as the just, shall rise, and rise to enter on the second death. But, in comparison with that of the righteous, their rising again is barely mentioned, as if the sacred Penman dreaded to write of it!

Not improbably, their very bodies, though immortal, shall be different from those of the righteous, and be adapted to their character and state!—being inlets to the unhappy influences of that world of woe into which they shall depart.

3. This doctrine is strongly adapted to encourage all Christians to stability, and persevering zeal in their Christian duty.

This, indeed, is the great use made of it by the apostle Paul, in that celebrated chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians, in which he directly treats of the resurrection.

There, after having shown, with great power and beauty, the reality of the resurrection of *Christ*, and the connected and consequent reality of our *own* resurrection; and having, in the most sublime and eloquent words, exulted in man's entire freedom from the sting of death, and triumphant victory over the grave, through Christ, he sums up all he had been saying with one of his own characteristic and emphatic expressions, and says: "*Therefore*, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. xv. 58.)

He had before declared, that, "if Christ be not risen, his preaching was in vain, and their faith was vain:" and that he and his fellow-apostles were false witnesses of God. He had said also, with reference, doubtless, to the self-denial and even suffering, to which true Christians in the performance of duty would, in this world, ever be exposed, that if in this life only we have hope, we are of all men the most miserable.

But raising his eye of faith beyond the grave, and looking into the eternal world, and remembering that we shall rise again, he animated himself and others by the conviction that he and they should not labor in vain; but that, in eternity, they should receive, through grace, a glorious and eternal reward! So should Christians now, and ever, comfort one another with these words. Our natural desire of immortality, and a true frame, requires thus to be sustained.

4. Our subject also gives great comfort to all Christians, in the death of pious relatives and friends. A Christian friend once said to me, being troubled in thought, respecting the form assumed by departed souls, previous to the resurrection of their former bodies, How, on your theory, can I satisfactorily conceive of one whom I love, who has left me, and gone hence, to be here no more?

But our subject, presented in the light of the word of God, need not, and will not, exclude the idea of form, as connected with departed souls, adapted to their present state of being, even as form must have appertained to Moses and Elias as they talked with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration, to the eyes of Peter, and James, and John. (Matt. xvii. 2; Mark, ix. 2.)

It is form, we have reason to believe, therefore, suited to their state, but not yet so developed or exhibited as to be fully adapted to ours, nor to *be* thus developed or exhibited until the resurrection; even as the brilliant bud, sweet to think of, and beautiful to behold, and fragrant to the senses, may not have yet bloomed into the splendid flower.

But, it is beginning to bud, and it shall soon bloom and blossom. And so each lonely Christian mourner, "concerning them which are asleep," must "sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For, if we believe that *Jesus* died and rose again, even to them also which *sleep* in Jesus will God bring with *him*." (1 Thess. iv. 23, 14.)

Yes! yes! may each mourner confidently say:—Thou parent! husband! wife! brother! sister! child! relative! and friend! thou art not lost, but gone before me! I can, by faith in Jesus, think of thee now! I shall hope to see thee then, "in that day." And when I meet thee, no embarrassment shall arise to oppress us, from any kind of past relations, necessary to our present state, for among them who shall be accounted worthy of that resurrection, they neither "marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God." Every such mourner may appropriately exclaim, in the words, which in seasons of death among us, are often cited:—

"Break from his throne, illustrious morn!
Attend, O earth! his sovereign word;
Restore thy trust, a glorious form
Shall then arise to meet the Lord!"

5. In conclusion, this subject adds to the solemnity of the day of Judgment, and increases our obligation to prepare for it.

And here I would especially allude to the theory of the judgement's being carried on in this life, and solemnly recognize its truth, in a proper sense, as I would avoid it in a false one.

There is a sense—a most solemn and important one—in which the judgment of this world is now. As old Simeon blessed the parents of Jesus, and said unto Mary, his mother, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against," "that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed," (Luke, ii. 34, 35;) so now the exhibition of Christ in his Gospel, as the Redeemer personally present, died aforetime, tries the human heart. And the preaching of his Gospel, in every congregation—in *this* congregation now—is a savor of life unto life or of death unto death. So that,

"'Tis not the whole of life to live."

Each one of us, under the Gospel, is preparing a character for eternity—is being tried—yes, in this sense, is being judged.

The last judgment, when the dead shall have been raised, will be but the formal consummation of what has been practically and unchangeably decided here. And it has been, in this view, as truly as it was strikingly and solemnly said, "Our sentence, in truth, is passed before our graves are dug."—*Bush.*

So that this revalation to us, of an hour in which all that are in the graves shall hear Christ's voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation—with all the stupendous scenery of the coming judgment—mingled with the discipline of life—the invitations of the Gospel—a Saviour's love—the testimony of conscience, and the stirrings of the Holy Spirit, in urging all of us, and every one of us, to prepare to meet our God. Especially do they urge us to fly to the Saviour, to make the Judge our Friend.

SERMON XX.

BY REV. JOSEPH F. TUTTLE,

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DUTIES OF HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS.

"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."—GENESIS xviii. 19.

"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."—JOSHUA xxiv. 15.

"For I have told him, that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not."—1 SAMUEL iii. 13.

In each of these passages, the responsibilities of parents to their children stand prominent; and, in the first two, those responsibilities are extended to all composing the household. The Lord commended Abraham because he would enjoin his children and his household to keep the way of the Lord, and Joshua boldly declares that his house, as well as himself, shall serve the Lord. The honor of these eminent men did not consist in doing more than their duty, nor did the curse on Eli's family arise from neglecting a work of supererogation, but one of highest obligation and necessity.

These facts in sacred history furnish a theme of immense importance, viz.: *the responsibilities of the heads of households.*

By the head of a household I mean primarily, any one who stands at the head of, and has control of, a family, who, by the laws of God and man, is placed in this relation to a family.

In commending Abraham, it is to be remarked that the name

of Sarah is not mentioned, and also that Joshua does not qualify his vow so as to depend on the aid of his wife. So also the wife of Eli is not mentioned.

A household, according to the Scripture, and common use, may consist of a wife, of children, and of those in the employ or under the guardianship of the head, residing in the family. Children, wards, servants, apprentices, and other laborers connected with the family, are all embraced in the definition of the household. Here, as in all other relations, responsibility is coextensive with obligation.

And, in examining the responsibilities of heads of households I may remark,—First, that whatever those responsibilities may be, the Scriptures make no exception in favor of the age or any other circumstances connected with members of the household. The fact of having attained legal majority, or the fact of being of a different religion, or even that of the dependent being older than the head of the family, are nowhere mentioned as exceptions. The only question to be considered is this, "Does the person belong to the household in such a sense that he is under the control of its head?" Abraham had a great household, yet the text no more exempts from the general law, the gray-headed servant, than the young heardsman; the steward Eliezer of Damascus, than Ishmael or the child of promise. All the household were included, without one specified exemption. The same unqualified law is seen in the vow of Joshua, "As for me and *my house*, we will serve the Lord." In the fourth commandment, the obligation to keep the Sabbath is not only imposed on the head, but the household also. Nor is it made a general obligation, resting on each individual, for which each is himself responsible, but the obligation to enforce that law on all the household is imposed on the head. He was not even to consider his duty bounded by the limits which embrace the son and daughter, the man servant and the maid-servant, the ox and the ass, but as extending even to the stranger who might be holding a temporary relation to the household.

This is an exceedingly important view, since it is common among pious men to relieve themselves of some part of these obligations which God has fixed on them. Some parents seem to feel that they are not bound to look after the conduct of their children who may have attained the age of sixteen, eighteen, or twenty years, much less when they attain their majority, although still members of the household. Others entertain the same erronous opinion concerning their domestics and laborers. They sometimes excuse themselves by saying, the the man or woman is of age, or of a different religious belief; or he is so ignorant and low-minded as to have no religious sentiment, or some other excuse. To such an extent is this true, that some domestics are suffered to live years in pious families,

without the heads of those families insisting on an undoubted right,—the presence of all committed to their care, at the regular worship of God at home, and publicly.

I cannot forbear enlarging on a topic which is becoming practical in this country. A large number of families rely on colored or foreign laborers. The latter are especially to be pitied, because so many pious employers regard themselves as favored with a special exemption from the rigid principles on which God has constituted the household. These laborers, in many cases, believe things which are likely to prove fatal to their salvation. We need not go so far as to say that no Romanist can be saved, but the most of those who make up our laborers, are in great ignorance of the way of salvation through Christ, and, in many cases, with all their devotion to their religion, they do not consider profane swearing, drunkenness, and other vices, as inconsistent with that religion. They know more about confessing sin to a fellow-sinner than to God—about the Virgin than Christ—about holy water than the pure water of life. Education has done nothing for them but to bind chains upon them, and to draw around them a thick veil of darkness. To such an extent is this true, that persons may be found among us who are just as ignorant of what God requires of them to be saved, as if they had always lived in the darkest corner of Burmah or China.

And when such voluntarily become members of our household, does not God in his providence make it our duty, if possible, to remove the deep darkness, and break the heavy chains which afflict these strangers? And yet some of us permit such to remain months and years under our roofs, without once telling them kindly what we conceive to be our duty to them: a duty so plainly involved in the household relation, that we must insist on maintaining it. It is greatly to our shame to be guilty of this neglect. Faithfulness on our part might save many deceived souls from delusion, and bring them out of the deep darkness into the clear light of the Gospel of Christ.

When a foreigner entered the family of an Israelite, without regard to his religious belief or worship, he must conform to those religious regulations which Jehovah had prescribed for the conduct of the household. If he refused to comply, he could not remain. Not only, in that case, must he leave the the family, but the nation. Nor do I speak of this as a matter of religious dictation, but of truth. There is something unseemly, and outraging all proper law, that a foreign priest, without a single sympathy for the Bible into which our civil institutions are engrafted, should be allowed to exert more power in our houses than we ourselves when we are convinced that he is wrong in doctrine and practice, and that we are right, that his teaching is according to the tradition of the elders, and

that ours is from God. It is insufferable that, when a good man is striving to lead his own children to heaven through means of family religion, any members of his household should be instigated to disturb even the time devoted to worship, not only by absenting themselves, but by continuing their customary work.

And does it not appear plain, that those heads of households who permit such things, have forgotten a plain principle laid down in the scriptures, that no exception is made in favor of any member of the household, be he a heathen, a Mahommedan, a Romanist, or an infidel? Such do not imitate Abraham, commanding his household to keep the right way of the Lord; nor Joshua, who bodly said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Let this illustration stand for the principle in its application to all the possible cases arising in the regulation of family religion.

We may now consider, secondly, the nature of the obligation which rests on the heads of households.

And for the sake of clearness and simplicity, we may consider the nature of this obligation in two parts, viz.: 1st, the obligation to secure a proper external conduct in those who compose the household; and 2d, the obligation to use all spiritual means to bring every member of the household to a saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ.

1st. The obligations resting on the heads of households to secure a proper external conduct in those committed to their care. This brings the history of Eli's family distinctly before us. It is worthy of special notice, that Eli gave the best advice to his sons, for "he said unto them, Why do ye do such things? for I hear of your evil doings by all this people. Nay, my sons, for it is no good report that I hear. Ye make the Lord's people to transgress. If any man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?" [1 Sam. ii. 23, 25.] We can scarcely imagine a more searching exhortation than is found in these words. The age of these sons we do not know, but gather from the context that they had nearly or quite attained to manhood.

When Samuel repeated to Eli what God had communicated to him, the reply of Eli showed that he possessed personally no ordinary piety: "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." [Ibid. iii. 18.] And he possessed another notable trait of piety. Israel was battling with the Philistines, and they had taken the ark of the Lord that it might save them out of the hands of their enemies. The sons of Eli, already marked as early victims of the divine displeasure, accompanied the ark. The aged priest and father sat by the wayside watching for news concerning the battle, and lo, what was the

trouble uppermost in his heart? Was it those sons with the curse hanging over them? No, The record of the fact is very affecting: "Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching, *for his heart trembled for the ark of God.*" [Ibid. iv. 13.] The panting messenger has already told him, "Hophni Phinehas are dead;" but the narative informs us that two sons cut off in one day did not inflict the keenest pang. It was "when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off his seat backwards by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died," [v. 18.] The heaviest judgment which came on this extraordinary man was the wrong done to the Lord, in that the divine prediction [Ibid. ii. 32.] was fulfilled: "Thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation."

From this narative we may gather an important lesson concerning the obligation of heads of household to secure a proper external conduct in those committed to their care. The law, as it pertained to the Israelites, was plain ane severe. If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and that when they have chastened him, willl not hearken unto them: then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him and bring him out to the elders of his city, and unto the gate of the place. And they shall say unto the elders of his city, this our son is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die, so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall her and fear." (Duet. xxi. 48, 31.) The parent at his peril must not suffer the sin specified on his son. He was not to be a mere moral suasionist, but was to chastise his son. He was not to resort to the last punishment, until wise teachings had been enforced with the rod. If these means failed, in orded to arrest the contagion which might corrupt the whole community, he must make the case public. The crime is to be alleged, and proved and then the criminal was to be stoned to death.

The scriptures do not hint that Eli had done anything more than to remonstrate with his sons. He did not chastise them, and consequently was debarred from the final resort. The church of God, in consequence, was greatly dishonored, because this father, as the head of a household, had neglected legally and rigidly to execute the laws of the Lord. And this pertained to external conduct. Eli could not change the hearts of his sons. Many sons might have been as vile at heart as Hophni and Phinehas, and yet maintained a proper external conduct. Plainly, in this respect, Eli was responsible, and because he did not properly meet this responsibility, the curse was to rest on his house for ever.

Our laws do not suffer such a resort in case of filial and incorrigible disobedience, as that pointed out in the Mosaic code,

and yet there can be no doubt that the essential elements of that code are of divine origin and perpetual force. Hence we may consider this as an argument in point, and illustrated by cases which are no more practical than painful.

Profaneness is not only one of the most foolish and useless of vices, but one most displeasing to God. So long as a child or servant is in a family, the head of that family is responsible for his observance of the third commandment. What possible right has any father to permit his son, unrebuked, to take the name of God in vain? What right has any householder to permit a laborer in his employ to breathe out blasphemy against Jehovah? In the twenty-fourth chapter of Leviticus this very sin is specified, and the stranger is placed on the same footing as the son. I will go farther and ask, where is the right of any head of a household to confine himself to mere remonstrances in his attempts to check this evil in those under his control?

By the same plain rule we may judge the conduct of households in regard to the Sabbath. The fourth commandment settles this question beyond dispute. We have no warrant to allow our sons or dependents to travel on the Sabbath, or otherwise trespass on holy time, without such excuse as shall be valid at the bar of God. It is needless to say that this embraces improper recreations and pursuits, and conduct in the house of God. The heads of households are held responsible for a proper outward respect to all the public as well as social duties of religion.

Perhaps facts will sustain me in the assertion, that a most urgent want of the community is here developed. The corruption of morals and manners, the growth of ruinous vices, and the destruction of souls, are progressing with the fatality of an epidemic, because this plain scriptural principle, this essential element of the household institution, has been so extensively forsaken. I appeal to the heads of households to restore this principle, which is as scriptural as it is safe, and admirable as it is necessary to the prominence and power with which God, who created man, has dignified it. He who walks according to its divine directions in the control of his family, will receive the reward of Abraham, whilst the one who either neglects or willfully disobeys it, will bring on himself and his house the curse of God on every Eli whose children make themselves vile, and he restrains them not.

The same rule applies to all the external conduct of a household: attendance on improper amusements, frequenting places where vicious habits are likely to be contracted. Sufficient is a word to the wise.

But I must hasten to consider the nature of this obligation in a second aspect.

2. It enjoins on the heads of households the diligent use of

all scriptural means to bring those under their care to a saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ.

And here it is proper to state a cardinal doctrine, not for the purpose of argument, but to guard against misapprehension. The regeneration of the heart is the work of the Holy Spirit. To present and urge the duty of parents, guardians, and masters, is not to question in the slightest degree this truth, which is affirmed by Scripture and facts.

No one in so many words questions the propriety of a religious education in the household; but the danger is, that in this age of cheap religious books, of Sabbth-schools, and other means of religious instruction, we shall depart from the plan of God, ordained as of perpetual force. We are liable, in our practice to place the plan of Raikes above the plan of God, and to commit to other teachers the work which belongs to the head of the family. This is just as radically a departure from the right way, as would be a benevolent plan to intrust the clothing and feeding of our families to a few kindly-disposed persons. This feeding and clothing of children in the wholesale way proposed by some modern philanthropists, is just as rational as to commit the religious training of a household solely to Sabbath-school teachers and preachers of the gospel. In its proper place and relations, each of these instrumentalities is vastly important; but when either of them supplants the home instruction, its results are evil, with slight mitigation. Jehovah is perfect, and he knew the wants of man as well when he gave his commandments to Moses, as he knows them now. He did not commission his servant to organize Sabbath-schools in which the young might learn the dealings of God with their fathers. Such a course would have sunk the nation into a horde of ignorant and unfeeling barbarians, out of whose minds, in a few generations, the recollections of those stirring events should have died. Jehovah understood the nature of man when he organized the means of keeping the Exodus fresh in the minds of his people. Accordingly, he constituted each head of a household an oracle to answer the inquiries of the thoughtful, and to impart religious instruction to all.

Here is the institution, the home-school, as it came from the forming hand of perfect wisdom. "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words which I command thee this day shalt be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach diligently to thy children, and shall talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house,

and upon thy gates." (Deut. vi. 4–9.) Here are words which are redolent of honor. They savor altogether of honor. The father is the teacher, and his business is not to be given into the hands of an hireling, or even some benevolent friend. How lifeless any school compared with this, in which the living realities of truth perfume the atmosphere, and lend a savor alike grateful and efficient! We cannot too much admire the wisdom of this arrangement, nor too closely imitate it in the religious education of our families.

"Would God" this sacred institution were revived into its ancient dignity and power; when religion should be taught at home: when the first lessons of truth should be blended with the fondlings of our fancy, and the more sedate endearments of youth, when the secret courtesies of life should become a gentle but mighty instrumentality in preserving the feet of children from the ways of sin. But how often is it, that fathers are more ready to talk of God and heaven to strangers than to their children! How often does family worship become either a formal, or else tedious exercise, the influence of which is to chill, and not to warm the hearts of the young! How often whole families grow up and leave the fire-side of home, without having enjoyed any systematic means put forth for their salvation! The Sabbath school, the Bible class, the pulpit, and the casual visit of the pastor, become practically the supplanters of home, or rather the meagre resorts to which we are compelled to fly, instead of being what they ought to be, the potent auxiliaries of the more potent influences of home.

Oh could we know that all parents in the church are in faith, seeking to answer this home responsibility, many anxieties about the future condition of the church would be spared: many parents would not be mourning over their unregenerate offspring who have reached mature years; many heads of households would not look with shuddering apprehension back at those once in their employ or under their care, who have not only left their families unconverted, but without any well-ordered effort on their part to that end.

The nature of this responsibility, plainly then, is such, that every head of a household is bound to employ at home all proper means to lead one committed to his care, to Christ, whether he be a heathen, a Romanist, an infidel, his own child, or a stranger sojourning within his gates. The head of the family is the shepherd of the flock, and a heavy woe shall overtake the shepherd through whose unfaithfulness any member of that flock perishes.

Let fathers pray, teach, and act at home, as though they stood at the very sources of power, and held the keys of heaven. They may be grateful for the instructions of the Sanctuary and the Sabbath-school, but they are not to commit their jewels altogether to other workmen, however skilful. None

can feel for them as parents ought to feel, nor labor as they ought to labor, that these jewels may shine in the diadem of Christ. Let strangers manage your property, Christian parents, for even though they rob you of it all, the loss can be repaired or endured, but over these immortal souls which God has entrusted to you, hold the power yourselves, and see that the Lord of Glory is honored in their salvation, by your faithful fulfilment of those conditions which are necessary to secure the efficient workings of the Holy Spirit. Begin with your lisping infants, cause light to dawn on their hearts early, and gently draw them to Christ. Secure the might of prayer, remembering how infinitely willing God is to grant his Holy Spirit. Work early and late, and dilligently in this enterprise, and prove God herewith, if he will not grant you the desires of your heart in the conversion of each member of your household.

From these trains of thought we may infer,

1. The immense responsibility of being the head of a household. The relation is connected with all that is good and excellent in this world, and desirable in the world to come. Every child, every servant, every dependent, augments the responsibility, until every such person may well cry out, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Let every head of a family enjoin it upon himself, to ponder this responsibility in all its greatness, its issues of eternal life and death, and set himself, with earnestness and prayer, to the work assigned him, as one who must give account to God for one of the most momentous trusts ever committed to a sinful, fallible, and weak steward.

2. The importance of the household institution. It is God's ordained school for the religious education of our race. And in that school, some of the greatest and most useful of men have been trained to fill high stations. Moses, the adopted son of a princess, was not educated without the aid of his pious mother—God plainly indicatiug by this, that "all the learning of the Egyptians" could not compensate the loss of this influence. Samuel was the child of prayer, whose heart was regenerated while he was yet a babe; and Timothy could bear witness to the faith of his "grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice." And as it were to impress this magnificent truth most deeply on the head of every household, to show in what esteem God holds the family school, the child Jesus was educated in it, and went forth from its sacred precincts to do the will of his Father, and to make an atonement for the sins of the world. If parents wish their sons to resemble a Samuel, a Timothy, or an Edwards, they must lay the foundation of that resemblence in the nursery; they must be according to Divine appointment, God's magistrate to restrain the waywardness of childhood, and God's teacher in justice and judgment; they must be God's ambassador, to bear with tearful earnestness the

messages of dying love from the Redeemer; they must be like the importunate wrestler with the angel of the covenant, crying out with holy energy. "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me" in the salvation of these immortal souls! Oh, be faithful at home, and God will honor you as he did Abraham, and not curse you as he did Eli. You shall perpetuate the blessings of redemption to other generations, instead of sending on your posterity such withering curses as fell on the descendants of Eli.

3. The neglect of this principle is the undoubted cause of ruin to many children of pious parents. Hophni and Phinehas, with their posterity, were the victims who perished in consequence of this, and it is to be feared that many since their day and for the same reason have raised fruitless lamentations in the world of despair. And now, let me earnestly inquire, has this congregation no Eli, with children doomed to eternal darkness, because their parents restrain them not when they make themselves vile? Say, fathers, shall any of your children be cursed with a curse, a withering curse, an ever-abiding curse, because their father was an Eli?

4. We see also wherein consists the true hope of the church, It is in the right education of children at home. By this I do not say it would not be a cause of joy here, as well as in heaven, if the adults were converted. Would it might be done speedily! And yet were a whole generation of such brought into the Church, what a vast difference would there be between them and a generation indoctrinated in infancy, and so trained that the Holy Spirit might consistently implant true grace in their hearts, and thus, from the first, piety become the habit of heart and life? our true hope is found in coming back to the Scriptural plan of religious education. The hearts of children must be moulded, and their habits formed. We must fulfill the conditions rendering it consistent for the Holy Spirit to engraft true religion on their hearts, so that manhood shall find them like holy plants in the Church, bending under the delicious fruits of holiness, rather than as trees grown up to maturity of evil, whose wide-spreading branches must be cut away in order to graft in the scions of piety and holiness, or else to be cut down as cumberers of the ground, and burned with unquenchable fire.

Mothers, I beseech you to impress piety on the babes in your arms, and the children at your side. Fathers, I beseech you to breathe religion into these young hearts, which daily are drinking in lessons of some kind from your eyes, your lips, and your actions. Oh, parents, suffer not your children to depart from the fire-side altar without knowing, as Hannah did, that they are growing before the Lord. With the divine assistance, so freely promised, and so faithfully given, you can accomplish much. Work, then, "while it is called to-day, for the night cometh, in which no man can work."

DAILY BREAD.

BY REV. GARDNER SPRING, D.D.

"Give us this day our *daily bread.*" This prayer regulates the amount of our wants, and the measure of our desires. We are instructed to ask only as we need; there is danger in asking more. God may *give* more, but it is not safe to ask for more, lest he should say of us as he did of his restive and grasping people of other days: "I gave them their request, but sent leanness into their souls."

Wealth is desirable, not for its own sake, nor merely for the wants it supplies. In itself it is an abstract imaginary thing, and where it is possessed, not unfrequently creates more wants than it gratifies. It is desirable to augment influence and extend the facilities of doing good. That accomplished statesman and jurist, the late William Wirt, a name that will long be illustrious and venerated in American history, on this topic makes the following touching observation: "Excessive wealth is neither glory nor happiness. The cold and sordid wretch who thinks only of himself: who draws his head within his shell and never puts it out, but for the purpose of lucre and ostentation; who looks upon his fellow-creatures, not only without sympathy, but with arrogance and insolence, as if they were made to be his vassals, and he to be their lord; as if they were made for no other purpose than to pamper his avarice, or contribute to his aggrandizement: such a man may be rich, but, trust me, he can never be happy, nor virtuous, nor great. There is in fortune a golden mean, which is the appropriate region of virtue and intelligence. Be content with that: and if the horn of plenty overflow, let its droppings fall upon your fellow-men; let them fall like the droppings of honey in the wilderness, to cheer the faint and weary pilgrim."

It is a sad thought that wealth is considered essential to distinction. It is not so. The voice of conscience, the voice of reason, the voice of God announces it not so. Wealth alone is not worth living for. Sigh not for wealth. Envy not the splendor of the affluent. The most wealthy are often most in want. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." No wise man will ever venture to pray that he might be rich. Let a man be thankful, if by exemplary diligence he can procure a comfortable living; if with this he can be cheerful and happy, he has the earnest of more, and what is of much greater consequence, he has the pledge that more will not be his ruin.—*Dr. Springs' Discourses.*

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SERMON XXI.

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JUST MEN MADE PERFECT.

Heb. xii. 23.—"But ye are come——to the spirits of just men made perfect."

Between the dispensation of the Law, and that of the Gospel, there is an intimate connection, yet a manifest difference. The connection is like that which the beginning of a thing has with the end of it. The one was a preparation for the other, and bore the same relation to the other, as the breaking up of the field and the deposit of the winter grain in its furrows, bears to the golden harvest which is to be gathered under the heat of summer. We may ask, why the purposes of Jehovah toward his church should not have been accomplished without any such preparatory process: but this is like asking why the child was not born a man, or the seed a tree. Let it suffice to say that the law of Progress has been stamped upon the moral and natural worlds for reasons which can even now be vindicated as wise and good; and much more when the light of the heavenly future is made to fall upon the divine plans. But this, by the way. It is certain that the principles and designs of God's government of this world, have been progressively unfolded in its history, and that the full light of the evangelic dispensation had its beginning in the dim morning of the legal dispensation, in which were seen only the shadows of good things to come.

But if there be this intimate connection between the law and the gospel, there is also, as we have said, a manifest difference between them, amounting, in some things, even to contrast. Just so far as the first discoveries of a Redeemer went, so far the gospel was

preached before unto Abraham, and the blessings of the plan by which sinful men were justified through faith, were secured and enjoyed by ancient believers. But the brightness of the meridian day, is very different from the dimness of the morning twilight. The uncertain traveller fears the possible dangers of his road, and even harmless objects seem distorted and threatening. This is always more or less true of a state of imperfect knowledge: a timid imagination will often conjure up more dangers than really exist. But in respect to the imperfect knowledge of the first dispensation, there was room for more than the workings of a timid imagination. There was, in fact, a stern and awful severity in the revelations of the divine law and justice to ancient Israel, which made them oftentimes very appalling, especially to such as did not penetrate the purposes of mercy which lay hid in the prophecies and ceremonies of the Old Testament Church. The law more than the gospel—the just indignation of God against sin, more than the mercy of God toward the sinner, characterized that dispensation; and of consequence, the experience even, of the devout worshipper, partook more of 'the spirit of bondage.'

In the well known passage of which the text forms a part, the apostle points out the contrast between the two dispensations in this respect. On the one hand, he reminds the Hebrew Christians that they are not brought by the gospel into the midst of the appalling wonders which accompanied the re-announcement of the broken but changeless law of Jehovah: flames of fire, and blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and blasts of a trumpet, and an awful voice, speaking awful words: all of them tokens of authority, power and justice which caused even the man of God to say, "I exceedingly fear and quake" Over-topping Sinai with its terrors, they were summoned to behold Mount Zion, "eternal sunshine resting on its head," and, spreading on all sides of it, the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, the beauty of holiness, whose glory all the symbols of earth fail to describe. Instead of terror-stricken Israelites, who entreated that the voice of words should not speak again its unendurable threatenings, they were bidden to behold an innumerable company of angels, their countenances radiant with joy, as they looked into the grand mystery of redemption: and mingling with them in holy brotherhood, the general assembly and church of the first-born, enrolled as citizens of heaven. Instead of God, the judge, executing justice against transgressors, they were called to behold God, the judge of all, surrounded by the ransomed and perfected spirits of just men: and finally—giving lustre to all, because the author of the reconciliation by which these once repellant

elements were harmonized—they are directed to look upon Jesus, the Mediator of this New Covenant, whose blood of sprinkling spake better things than the blood of Abel.

That the apostle means to present these things in contrast, there can be no doubt. Nor is the object he had in view at all doubtful. He aims to animate the soul with all the hopeful emotions, which such an attractive group of objects would naturally awaken. Courage, joy and peace in believing, must follow from steadily contemplating the array of blessings provided in the New Covenant; and in the hope of at last participating in the fulness, the believing Hebrew to whom he was writing, would find the best support under the persecutions to which his faith was then exposing him.

Out of this brilliant collection of evangelic glories, I have selected one—with the hope that a more particular consideration of it than we should be able to give, were we to notice each of the features of the picture, may animate our souls also, with similar anticipations. Our visit, to-day, shall be to heaven. And glad are we to get away, for a season, from the sights and sounds of the world we live in; for though a prison of hope, it is still a prison. We are not at home: we are not come to our heritage—and it is only wonderful that we should not, much oftener than we do, look forward with delight to the day of our discharge. It is for the purpose of quickening your desires, that we now call upon you, my brethren, to consider the holy group of just men made perfect, into communion with whom, faith brings us.

The subject before us, invites our attention—

I. To the REALITY;

II. To the FOUNDATION; and

III. To the NATURE of the condition enjoyed by 'the spirits of just men made perfect.'

I. The reality of their condition calls for a brief notice.

The first thing the mind needs to be assured of, is the fact of an immortal and spiritual future. All speculation as to its nature must be comparatively useless and inoperative, until we have attained to the conviction that it is a great truth—a certainty, not a mere possibility—a reality, not a dream of a hopeful imagination. And to reach such a conviction, so that it may act upon us with a force as great as the assurance we all feel that the sun will rise to-morrow, ought to be a principal aim of the soul. The more positive and definite our faith is in the glorious fact, that "there remaineth a rest for the people of God," the more will all our movements harmonize with the requirements of the gospel which reveals

it. The evidence upon which this truth is established, addresses itself to the whole man, to the heart as well as to the understanding. If I am to debate the question with any one, upon the ground of mere reason, I should feel that much of the success of the argument must depend upon the degree in which the higher instincts of human nature are in active operation within him. If he has trained his understanding altogether in the school of material science, and much more, if he has educated himself in the school of sensuality, I should feel that the doctrine of a future spiritual holy life would have but a feeble hold upon his belief, because in either of the supposed cases, the moral instincts of the soul are deadened by neglect or abuse, and the doctrine is deprived of the powerful testimony which these instincts give. While on the other hand, if, as you will all admit, the highest specimens of our human nature are precisely those in whom the mental and moral powers have been most harmoniously developed, it is no small presumptive proof of immortality, that it is with such minds that the argument for the perpetuity of our nature is most powerful. The impulse of Hope which prompts us to look for something good, and of Fear, which apprehends something evil, both point to the future. The warm affections which bind us together in the relations that compose this life, and which make the thought of a final and irreparable breaking of the bonds, appaling ; and the inveterate clinging to existence, coupled with longings after a higher state of knowledge, purity and happiness, what are these, but so many witnesses to the truth, that "though a man die, yet shall he live again?" In all these, (as in other respects that we might name,) it is true, that "nothing THIS life unriddles, but the next."

It is to this class of evidences that the word of God does most powerfully appeal. Our faith in the reality of the future life of the people of God—here called "just men made perfect"—does not rest exlcusively upon a divine declaration of the fact, in the shape of a logical proposition : That we have, and if we had no other evidence of the fact, that would be enough. But in giving that assurance, the word of God does not limit itself to a bare affirmation of it,—but, taking it for granted rather, it weaves it into every discovery it makes of the character and will of God, and the relations of man. All is made to bear upon the grand fact that he is immortal. This lies at the basis of accountability. It is no less presupposed in the Law than in the Gospel. For when it is said that Jesus Christ brought life and immortality to light, it is not meant that he was the first to reveal this truth to the world, but only that he most fully exposed to view the nature of immortal life, and especially the condi-

tions upon which it might be secured. We must turn then to the process by which the gospel brings out into active existence the noblest and purest traits of our nature, if we would know what is the most powerful means of impressing the soul with the certain reality of "the life which is to come." By delivering man from the defilements of sin, the gospel ennobles him, and this most effectually puts upon him the stamp of immortality: so that the bare suspicion that one thus ennobled by communion with God, and filled with divine aspirings, is to perish at death, is too revolting to be endured for a moment. It puts the doctrines of God's benevolence and justice, yea, of his very being, into the same vessel with the doctrine of a future retribution, so that if the latter be wrecked upon the shoals of unbelief, the former must be also. It calls upon the parent, the child, the friend, to believe and feel this truth, by appealing to the horror which chills the soul at the bare suggestion that the loved ones who are departed are utterly perished, and that nothing remains of them but the dust of their graves. It asks the the Christian believer, struggling with evil and longing for higher reaches in holiness, whether he can credit for a moment the belief that prayer and hope are chimeras. It summons us to the bed of death, where gleams of holy confidence in the future are seen shining through the chinks of the frail tabernacle; it takes us to the funeral pile of the martyr, and to the deep dungeons, and the dens, and caves of the earth, to behold the victims of injustice and cruelty which no HUMAN law could restrain nor punish; and surrounded by these witnesses, it leaves us to feel that the condition of perfectness now enjoyed by the "just," is not a less substantial reality, than this present condition of imperfection, in which they once "groaned, being burdened."

II. Let us now procced to consider the FOUNDATION of the heavenly perfectness of the spirits of just men into whose communion we are brought by the gospel.

This is sufficiently indicated by the word here employed to characterize them. They are called "JUST" men, a title which, when used in Scripture, has a much larger sense than when used in common speech. In the latter case, it indicates simply an adherence to the laws of equity between man and man, and he is called a "just" man who does not defraud nor injure in any way his fellowman. But the scriptural sense of this important word is, conformity to all the laws of God, and therefore it covers as well our duties to God, as those we owe to man. Moreover, in the duties we owe to man, it embraces as well the obligations of benevolence as those of strict equity. In this primary sense of the word "just,"

and its equivalent "righteous," those only can claim the appellation, whose works of piety toward God, and of benevolence and justice toward man, are perfectly conformed to the two tables of the Law.

You will ask me, are there, have there ever been, any such upon earth? And the answer must be now, what it was in all former days (we give it in the language of the word of God), "there is not a just man upon earth, who doeth good and sinneth not; there is none just, (righteous) no, not one;" and our observation confirms the truth of the awful declaration. So that if a perfect personal conformity to the righteous Law of God be a necessary condition of the entrance of men into the company of heaven, we may again ask, who can hope for admission?

This view of the condition of all men, in the eye of God's Law, makes it indispensable to bring in that other sense of the word "JUST," which is known only in the word of God, and according to which it is synonymous with the word "JUSTIFIED." A believer can be called just only in this scriptural sense. He is a JUSTIFIED man, just by faith; declared "just" in the eye of the Law, not because he is so inherently, but by the gracious imputation to him of a justness (righteousness) not his own but another's, even Christ Jesus, the end of the Law for justness (righteousness) to every one that believeth. By the Divine grace the merit of the works and sufferings of the surety is counted to him for justness (righteousness) and on that account he is called and treated as "just" in the view of the Law.

You see then that the peculiar provisions of the Redemption plan, where justice and compassion join in their divinest forms, constitute the foundation of the heavenly perfection now enjoyed by the spirits of "just" men. For the truth of this view, (were we to undertake the duty of arguing it at length,) we should be obliged to refer you to the whole economy of God; to the gospel representations of the fall and ruin of man, and the distinct declaration that he is saved by grace, through the Redemption which is in Christ Jesus. We might (were it needful) show how this truth is involved in the glory of the cross: how God set forth the Mediator to be a propitiatory sacrifice, for the express purpose of declaring his own "justness" in the very act of remitting past sins, so that he might be "just" in the act of justifying the ungodly who believe in Jesus. (Rom. iii. 20—31.) We will not, however, vindicate this truth from the sophisms of self-righteousness, for it is self-righteousness after all which underlies all the violent opposition which this "offence of the cross," has met with from moralism, and ritualism under various forms. If there be any here who still doubt that it is of such

"just" souls that the general assembly and church of the first-born is composed, we shall content ourselves with summoning themselves to testify. Hear their own lips renounce all reliance upon "their own righteousness:" bowing before the Throne, this is their doxology: "Unto him that loved us and hath washed us from our sins in his own blood, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever." Nor is this the doxology of a part only, but of all. Not one self-delivered soul, not one who does not count himself a monument of grace, can be found among all the children of the fall, who now are or ever will be part of that blessed company. Each one of them bears the name of "God and of the Lamb" upon his forehead, (Rev. xxii. 4:) and will throughout eternity delight to ascribe every thrill of joy, every honor, every holy affection which enters into his perfectness, to "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

III. The NATURE of this perfectness next demands our notice.

1. Need I say that it is a HOLY perfection? In the economy of God's moral government, holiness is as necessary to a perfect condition, as heat is necessary to animal or vegetable life. The enjoyments which are found disjoined from this moral purity, are factitious and perishable. Holiness is the crowning glory of God. This gives lustre to his power and knowledge. This makes Heaven. I know that men are not ready to take this view. In their eyes, Genius, Intelligence, Power, are the primary objects of attraction; but in the eyes of angels, Holiness transcends them all. Not insensible to the other glories of the Godhead, but more overwhelmed with the bright atmosphere of holy purity through which they view them, they are represented as crying continually, not "mighty AND wise art Thou," but "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty."

And when we, my hearers, see all things through this medium, as the saints made perfect do, we too will sing thus. Oh! for such "a faculty divine!" Let us pray for it, and strive to reach it. Why should we allow ourselves to be so governed by what is seen and felt by the outward sense—as if we belonged to the sensuous who could see nothing even in an angel, but the bloom upon his wings? The highest forms of material glory are less than the spiritual. What is a jewelled crown to the soul which shines through the eyes of him who wears it? What is an universe of material grandeur to one single spiritual essence in whom the intelligence and purity of God are reflected?

When upon earth those now perfect spirits longed for this chiefly; and could we now hear the holy Psalmist, we should find his song

praising the grace which had rewarded those aspirations which, while he was here below, proved him to be a child of God, as when he cried, "I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness." And the disciple whom Jesus loved, could we single out his voice from that choral harmony, we should find it one of thanksgiving for the fulfilment of the confidence he thus beautifully expressed, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God: but it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him."

2. The perfection we are called to contemplate is a perfection of intelligent activity. The most that has been disclosed concerning the heavenly state, is its holiness. But into the conception of holiness there necessarily enters the idea of enlarged knowledge and active service. Holiness is not simply a negative condition, it is indeed the negative of sin, but it is more; it is the spring of the soul, its balance-wheel, its inspiration, its vital atmosphere, and especially will it prove to be a fountain-head of inexhaustible energies, where it is complete, as it is in the saints made perfect. If, even now, its faintest dawnings in the form of godly sorrow for sin, and trembling faith in Christ rouses the sleeper from the apathy of sin, to the labors and self-denial of the narrow road of duty to God, how much more will he mount as upon eagles' wings, run and not be weary, walk and not faint, when there shall be no more sin to enfeeble his faculties!

They take a very feeble, not to say false, view of the state of perfection, who make repose the predominant thought in their conception of the heavenly world. Such a heaven is akin to that of the false prophet, a condition no higher in dignity than the harem which forms the Mussulman's earthly happiness. It is true that we know but little of the forms of activity which a beatified soul shall assume; but this we know, that knowledge is to be acquired, and that implies mental activity; moreover, if angelic beings are employed in active service, there is no reason, at least in the nature of things, why the spirits of just men made perfect may not be. Can any one conceive of Paul, or David, or Isaiah, as fallen into a passive state of self-enjoyment, which can scarcely escape the charge of sloth? No; there are no spiritual voluptuaries in Heaven. They live! with a vastly increased energy, every moment furnishing new fields for their inquiries, and new calls upon their love and service. Mysteries of nature and grace are to be studied, past history unrolled and pondered, works of love mingling with direct offices of worship. All are busy in knowing, doing and adoring. All are tending forward and upward toward the Infinite in an inter-

minable but unwearying approximation. Without jar, confusion, or hurry, the motion of the soul is the REPOSING motion of the eagle.

"Ye cannot see
The stirring of his wings, and yet he soars."

If now, the emphatic word, "rest," so often applied in Scripture to describe the heavenly state, seem to any inconsistent with these views of a constant activity, let us

3. Consider HAPPINESS as part of the perfection of the spirits of just men. We feel as if it were better to be silent here; for who can describe that exceeding and eternal weight of glory? CONTRAST, is our only means of reaching any suitable conception of the greatness and pureness of the joy that animates every soul which forms one in that throng of the justified and perfected. Contrast, I say: what this present world is, that heaven is not. Take the history of the present life: is it not the history of a discipline, which involves fighting within and fears without? Exclude then from your present Christian experience all painful misgivings and doubts, all anxious watchings, all struggles with sin in its numerous forms of temptation, all battling with ourselves, the evil one, and a false-hearted world: all efforts to drag along the reluctant soul in the way of duty: take away all carking care about the future, all alternations of hope and disappointment: remove the idea of separation from beloved friends, who, when torn up from our side, like trees torn from the soil, leave a yearning void which cannot be refilled: imagine all the pain and shame of persecution for Christ's sake, all sights and sounds of anguish which assail us from the crowded haunts of life, taken away from the experience of the Christian life, and nothing left but a holy residuum of elevating and unchecked communion with God and holy beings—and you can easily see how the promise of "rest" shall be made good to the people of God. It is rest from sin first, and then from sin-begotten sorrow, and trials which sin has made necessary, and toils which sin has made irksome. You can also easily perceive, how such rest, which thus enters necessarily into the happiness of the blessed, is by no means incompatible with the fact of a continued and happy activity. The hour which admitted the spirits of just men into it, was, to them, as the sunset of painful, and the sunrising of joyful labor. Their happiness consists in the divine harmony in which all objects and persons shall move in relation to each other, and around the central sun, like the bright orbs which fill the heavens, ceaselessly revolve in their appointed courses, yet in such harmonious order, that they seem to be in beautiful repose upon the bosom of immensity.

Into the presence of these perfected saints are you come this day. From this view of their character and condition, learn—

First, That the glory of the world that now is, is not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed. Duty and interest therefore both adjure us to prize more highly our heavenly citizenship, and to declare plainly by our lives that 'we seek a country.' The degree of satisfaction with which we look upwards to those who, having passed over Jordan, are now safe in the land of promise, will always be in proportion as we love the road they travelled. The pageant of the world—every day declares it—passeth away. 'What then have we any more to do with its idols?' What communion hath our light with its darkness, our Christ with its Belial, Moloch or Mammon? Oh my brethren! take care not to live as if you thought it a fine thing to be on equally good terms with both worlds, but 'be ye followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.'

Secondly, Our subject teaches us to rejoice that the soul is not tied to an immortal body like that which now holds it prisoner. Oh! what if we were! Blessed be God, this rough husk shall not forever hold the gem. We would not encourage the morbid disgusts with which some persons brood over the evils of the present condition, and the morbid attraction which draws them only to the darker mysteries of life. This world is the theatre upon which the mighty work of Redemption is acted, and by that work life is glorified. We dare not complain at the hidden secrets of providence, knowing that sin explains the problem of sorrow, for with such an interpretation of its mysteries, coupled with an assurance of a future reckoning and restoration, we may well bear our lot with patient humility. While we have duties to perform, and while earthly mercies mingle with earthly ills, far from us be the proud and rebelious disgusts of those who abuse their Maker, by abusing the life in which he has been pleased to place us for a season.

Yet, with all these qualifications—reduce the evils endured till they are only half in number, and quadruple the blessings of the happiest earthly lot—a submissive but decided preference for the nobler and better life of heaven will predominate in a mind thoroughly Christian. Make the best of it, our present dwelling is but a tent, rent in many places, through which the wind, rain and cold will find their way. We have given the reason. This is a sinful life. Hence its troubles:

> "Hence all thy groans and travail pains,
> Hence, till thy God return,
> In wisdom's ear thy blythest strains,
> Oh nature, seem to mourn!"

To shake off the last fetter of sin—to become instead of a child, a man—to see and know, as he is seen and known—our only wonder is that the believer's desires are not more thoroughly fired with the 'far better' prospect of being 'with Christ,' and that his language is not oftener, 'I would not live alway.' Thanks be to God, that the immortality promised to us, is not a perpetuation of the present condition.

THIRDLY, I exhort you to take large views of the communion of saints. It is good not only to look around us to our fellow-believers, but upwards to those who, having 'fought the good fight,' are now triumphing in the presence of Christ. They too are one with us, for they belong to the Head. Yea—(I love the charming words)

"All the children of our Lord
In heaven and earth are one.
One family, we dwell in him,
One church, above, beneath,
Tho' now divided by the stream,
The narrow stream of death.
One army of the living God
At his command we bow,
Part of the host has crossed the flood,
And part is crossing now."

Oh blessed host! which no man can number.

FINALLY, I turn to you my world-loving, impenitent hearers, and bid you learn the conditions upon which alone you can join that general assembly of enrolled citizens of heaven. You must be "just" men, in the gospel sense of that pregnant word. You must be believers, subjects and followers of Christ. You must find that one road which led them safe to heaven; and every step of which is sprinkled with the blood of expiation.

There is a religion which you must begin by renouncing. It is the religion which alone can be called, the Catholic or Universal, for it alone has all the signs which have been falsely claimed for Popery. It alone has been at all times, in all places, and embraced by all! It has been found under a Pagan, a Mohammedan, and Christian dress. We have all of us known it from experience, and I fear that some of you, even now, know no other. Do you ask what I mean? I mean the religion of self-righteousness, self-wisdom and self-strength. Whether it hold up its head in the scornful indifference of rationalism, or creep upon the ground in superstitious fear, counting its prayers and scourging its flesh, it has equally in view self-salvation. Under all its disguises, with all the elastic principles by which it can so easily fit itself to all the forms of human corruption, it must be abandoned, for it is the enemy of God, and the rejecter of 'the grace that is in Christ Jesus.' The gates of the heavenly city are barred against it, just men made perfect abhor it, and you, my hearer, must find your way to the foot of the cross, and with penitent shame renounce it.

Which may God grant—and to the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost shall be all the glory. Amen.

SERMON XXII.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF LITTLE THINGS.

"Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth."—JAMES iii. 5.

THE theme of this discourse is the importance of little things. It is an observation neither the less true nor the less striking, because of its standing upon the sacred records of religion "behold! how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" Why, my hearers, it was but an echo of his thought was presented in that beautiful passage of a German writer who compares nature to a great poet, who produces his noblest efforts with the fewest means: a great thought and a few household words to clothe it in. If so, then how magnificently poetic must have been the mind of the old Hebrew lawgiver, Moses, who gave to the world that sentence unparalleled for sublime simplicity, "God said, let there be light; and light was!"

Ordinarily, when men undertake some great enterprise, they resort to means great and complicated, in proportion to the magnitude of the work contemplated. When, therefore, any result is accomplished through the agency of means apparently trivial and inadequate, it always exalts our ideas of the skill of the contriver! But simplicity of means in the production of great results, is characteristic of the great system of nature; or, to speak more intelligibly and more correctly, is characteristic of the operations of God. The great Author of Nature ever operates by little causes. The entire universe teems with illustrations of this truth. Everywhere, mighty effects spring from small and seemingly inadequate causes. Of this truth, each one of the great laws of nature is demonstrative. Witness—

1st. The single principle of gravitation—that mysterious influence which pervades every part of the known universe; which fixes the sun in his orbit, retains the stars in their places; which gives stability to the earth and motion to the sea; which renders the huge mountains stationary, and causes the rain to drop on the fields, makes the brooks and rivulets to course through the valleys, and hasten to mingle in the waters of the deep. It is this influence, everywhere diffused, that like a direct exertion of divine power,

keeps the planets each in its due position and regular order, so that their motions are performed without clashing or confusion. 'Tis this that gives stability to our buildings, and safety to our footsteps; 'tis this that causes the ship to float buoyant upon the surface of the ocean, and this that carries the anchor swiftly down to the bottom. 'Tis this that poises the eagle on steady wing high in the air, and this brings the arrow, however vigorously propelled heavenward, back to the ground. Search where you will, in heaven or on earth, on the lofty mountain or the wide plain, in the deep pit or in the mighty ocean, and everywhere you find this one simple principle operating, and producing results the most surprising, and at times, even seemingly contradictory.

But 2d. Other laws of nature, as they are termed, are nothing but the operation of causes equally simple and equally powerful, as the expansibility of vapors, gases, and all aeriform fluids.

To this simple property of expansibility it is owing that, like as when water is heated over fire, it passes off rapidly in the form of steam, rising in the atmosphere, and unless collected in appropriate vessels, is soon lost to our perceptions—so, also, from the vast extent of surface presented to the sun's rays, in the ocean, and the countless bays, lakes, gulfs, and rivers everywhere traversing the land, vapor is perpetually rising in the atmosphere, floating lightly far away to distant regions, settling around the summits of mountains, and feeding the springs of innumerable brooks that roll down the mountain's side, and gradually swell into large rivers, or, it hovers over the earth and descends in fertilizing showers to bless the labors of the husbandman, and supply food to every living thing.

To the operations of the same apparently trivial cause, we can trace some of the most remarkable phenomena of nature. Hence originate tempests, that blacken the heavens and deluge the earth with showers; and fierce winds that rouse the placid sea to wild commotion, and prostrate the tall trees of the forest, purifying the atmosphere and contributing to the health and happiness of mankind, whose proudest works they seem so often to menace with destruction. To the same cause, also, we trace the desolating earthquakes, and the terrific volcanic eruptions. In those vast laboratories that God has built deep within the bowels of the earth, where fierce fires glow, and exhaustless materials are laid up to supply them, vapors and gases of various kinds, and in immense quantities, are generated, and are perpetually accumulating now in one place and now in another. When this accumulation reaches a certain point, the expansive force overpowers the resistance offered by the superincumbent mass of earth and rock, and mountain and sea, that opposes its escape; the surface of the earth heaves and trembles; the sea itself rushes suddenly on the before dry land, or retires back towards the great deep, and islands appear and mountains rise—or they sink, and give place to wide, yawning chasms. The pent-up vapors escape; the fiery fluid whence it had originated, is disgorged in streams of burning lava; and then gradually the tremblings of the earth abate; its heavings cease—and tranquility again rests on the scene of desolation, where lie the ruins of cities

and palaces, of gardens and vineyards, the work of busy man, wrought in years of toilsome labor by thousands combined; but destroyed in a moment by the operation of one little cause, under the direction of the great Architect of the universe, who seeth not as man seeth, and whose ways are above our ways, as the heavens are higher than the earth!

But 3d. In other instances, this peculiarity in the divine procedure is apparent.

The mariner who navigates the immense Pacific, and some parts of the Indian Ocean, finds great changes perpetually taking place. Where once lay the bright waters of a smooth sea, the white foam now tosses and breakers roar, for reefs and rocks have there risen up; and where, but lately, ran along ledges of sunken rocks, betrayed only by the dashing of the breakers, fair islets now stand covered with verdure, shaded by the tall palm-tree, and in some instances, affording secure habitation to birds and beasts, and even to man. Careful research has ascertained that these NEW CREATIONS, as they may be designated, are the work of countless myriads of little insects with which these seas abound, and which labor continually with incessant activity, raising up from the fathomless deep, or at least from the summits of deeply submerged mountain ranges, pile after pile of coral rock, a substance often as hard as marble, and a secretion from their own countless little bodies. Their work they carry forward with ceaseless accumulation till it reaches the SURFACE of the sea, when it stops. But, on this naked surface of rock, a coating of light soil speedily appears, vegetation commences, and soil still further accumulates, until where once rolled the ocean wave unbroken and smooth, islands separately or in groups, spread their rich beauties to the sun, and became the resting-place and the home of man. And all these amazing results, to accomplish the least of which, would baffle the ingenuity and defy the power of the whole human race combined, are brought about by the noiseless and secret, but untiring action of countless millions of little animalculæ, totally unconscious of the nature and the extent of their operations, and hardly holding a place in the scale of animated beings. So obvious is it that in the works of nature, God operates by little causes, accomplishing great results by apparently inadequate means.

But 4th. In the movements of Providence toward men, a similar method of operation is apparent.

How often is it found that an event seemingly fortuitous and trivial, leads to consequences of a momentous character. The first interview of Paris, the son of Priam, with the Grecian queen Helen, might have been merely accidental, but it awakened in his bosom a train of emotion, and it inspired him with purposes which led to the Trojan war, the theme of Homer's muse, and it elicited events which by their influence on that generation, and by the power which the poet's description of them has exerted upon the minds of thousands in every succeeding generation, from Alexander of Macedon to the present day, have contributed, to an incalculable extent, to mould the characters of the great leaders in human affairs, to determine the revolutions of empires, the progress or delay of civilization,

and the whole aspect of society. So also in Rome, it was the ill treatment of one woman of lofty spirit (Lucretia,) that overthrew the monarchy, established the Republic, and planted the seeds of that love of liberty which, for so many ages, influenced the movements of that extraordinary people, and which, to this day, is felt throughout every region of the civilized world.

It was a mere trifle that prevented Oliver Cromwell and several others who afterwards distinguished themselves as his associates, from emigrating to the colonies of the New World some time before the first steps were taken in that revolution which cost the monarch of England his head, expatriated his family, and elevated Cromwell to the seat of highest authority in the nation. Cromwell and his friends had engaged their passage to America, and were only awaiting the signal to embark, when, by some caprice of the court, they were prohibited from leaving the country. Had any accident occurred to delay the order of the court, until after they should have commenced their voyage to the American colonies, who can tell how different might have proved the course of events, and how different might have been the aspect of affairs over all Europe at the present hour. It is far from improbable that the destiny of the English nation and of Europe hung upon that single event, the arrival or non-arrival of the court-courier, before the change of wind to favor Cromwell's embarkation. The life of a monarch, and the destinies of a proud nation, hung upon the speed of a horse

Another striking illustration of the influence of little things, is found in the history of the negro race. The celebrated Bartholomew de las Casas, a Spanish prelate who accompanied Columbus in his second voyage to Hispaniola, and on the conquest of Cuba settled there, moved by compassion for the suffering of the native Indians, who were worked as slaves in the mines by the Spaniards, conceived the idea of sparing this feeble race that were fast passing away, by substituting negroes, a much more athletic race, and that were to be obtained from the Portuguese settlements on the coast of Africa. After petitioning to the Spanish government successively under Ferdinand, the regent Cardinal Ximenes, and then Charles V., he succeeded. In 1503 a few negro slaves had been sent into St. Domingo, and afterwards Ferdinand allowed the importation of large numbers. The labor of one negro was found to equal that of four Indians. Ximenes discouraged the traffic: Charles V. revived it, and conferred the privilege as a monopoly, on a Flemish favorite. In 1518 the right was sold to some Genoese merchants, who reduced the traffic to a regular system. The French obtained it next, and retained it till it had yielded them a revenue of two hundred and four millions of dollars. In 1713 the English secured it for thirty years. For the last four of these years, Spain purchased the English right for five hundred thousand dollars.

Thus, through the mistaken benevolence of a Spanish priest, a measure was set on foot, which the cupidity of Christian Europe turned into a system of fearful cruelty, a system, by the operation of which the commerce of the world, and the aspect of all civilized society has been affected. A system, which seems likely, in God's overruling Providence, to convulse one of the mightiest nations on

the globe; and eventually to return light and peace, civilization and Christianity on the eighty millions of African tribes. How great a matter a little fire kindleth.

Another instance. In August, 1799, a French artillery officer, named Bouchard, when digging near Rosetta, in Egypt, for the foundation of a military work, came upon a huge block of basalt, marked with various strange characters, and hieroglyphics. These characters were found to exhibit three inscriptions, in three different characters, one of which proved to be the Greek. This was the celebrated Rosetta stone now in the British museum, which has been the subject of diligent investigation by learned antiquarians of every nation in Europe; and this stone, under the ingenious labors of Young, and Champollion, yielded, by a comparison of the characters found in the different inscriptions, a key to unlock the treasures of ancient wisdom, shut up for so many centuries, under the hieroglyphics of Egypt.

The discovery of a small obelisk on the isle of Philoe, in the Nile, in 1816, by Caillaud, the French traveler, on which was a Greek inscription containing the names of Ptolemy and Cleopatra, greatly aided Champollion in unraveling the mystery. Thus, as the result of the seemingly trivial event of finding an old broken stone at Rosetta, and a little obelisk, years afterwards, at Philoe, the industry of antiquarians was set to work, and that industry has been crowned with astonishing success.

The inscriptions found on the decaying monuments, and on the frail papyri of Egypt, are now quite intelligible; the ancient records of Egyptian dynasties are rapidly opening to the inspection of all men. Thence, the infidel is drawing largely his materials for renewed assault on the records of revelation; and the Christian is patiently awaiting the issue of a finished discovery among these old monuments, perfectly confident that the TRUTH of human records, once fully made out, will fall naturally and inevitably into the train of the handmaids and supporters of revelation.

Little did the French artillery officer dream, when the men working under his direction, first heaved up that dark and mutilated block near Rosetta—that around that old stone, and over its mutilated inscriptions, the friends and enemies of the ancient Jewish Scriptures would rally for a long and arduous, and possibly a final conflict, as to the truth of revealed religion. How great a matter a little fire kindleth.

And often it is seen that some unlooked for, and seemingly trivial event baffles the foresight of men, frustrates their plans, and defeats their most important enterprises. A sudden tempest will sometimes scatter and destroy a numerous and well-appointed fleet. The fate of a battle on which are hanging the destinies of empires, will sometimes be decided by a thick mist, a driving storm, or by a random shot which cuts down an experienced leader, and spreads a resistless panic through his whole army.

In private life, also, results of great magnitude flow from causes apparently insignificant. The flight of a bird, the fall of an acorn from the tree, the course taken by a flash of lightning, or the singing of a tea-kettle over the fire, may give birth to a train of thought

in the mind of some quiet observer, that shall lead to conclusions little anticipated, elicit new discoveries in science, and open the way for improvements in art, of the first importance to commerce, and to the practical business of life, and diffuse incalculable benefits among millions of our race.

Again, the accidental meeting of two entire strangers, may lead to an acquaintanceship that shall ripen into friendship strong and enduring—throw an entirely new aspect over the emotions, the sentiments, the pursuits, and the whole character of both, and send its influence, healthful and cheering, or the reverse, over the whole life, aye, and over the immortal interests of both—possibly even of others with them. Many a well-disposed youth has been led by the influence of a cherished companion, into scenes of gaiety and pleasure, of dissipation and vice. His mind has been poisoned, his principles perverted, his character degraded. While others, by the kind counsel, the cheering influence, and the gentle force of consistent example in a faithful friend, have been strengthened in virtue, habituated to what is good and honorable, and humbled even to seek to obtain the pearl of great price. "He that walketh with the wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." And it is often the merest accident, apparently, which determines whether a youth shall be the companion of wise men, or of fools, whether he shall be honorable and good, or base and worthless, whether he shall be saved or lost forever.

Further illustration of this truth is found 5th. In the production of the present moral aspect of mankind.

The moral characteristics of men are certainly very corrupt. An inspired writer has taught us, "the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," and it is certainly true. There is universally prevailing in the world a deep depravity filling the earth with crimes and with sorrow. And yet it was not always thus. The voice of even pagan tradition, and the express testimony of holy writ, both assure us, that as he came originally from the hands of his Maker, man was good and pure. How, then was this great change brought about? Revelation teaches, that by one man's disobedience sin entered into the world, and death by sin. It was, then, by the transgression of the one first parent of our race, that the whole multitude of his descendants were made sinners. Trivial as that act may seem, it was the reaching forth of the hand by our first progenitor to pluck and eat the forbidden fruit, which opened the floodgates of evil to inundate a world for many long and successive ages in sin, and sorrow, and suffering. By that one act, our first father Adam degraded his nature, perverted his capacities, and then he transmitted to his posterity, through all their countless generations, a nature corrupt and prone to evil. And to this day, in every corner of our globe, the fruits of that one sin abound. Everywhere, men prove the reality of their descent from the fallen Adam, by evincing, that like him, "they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." Sin everywhere prevails, and suffering, and sorrow, and death follow in its train. Yea, the very elements by their disorder and wild commotion, and by the fearful desolations they oft occasion, seem to proclaim that

the physical arrangements in this world are adapted to suit the circumstances of a race frowned on of heaven, for its moral turpitude; all, all telling of the fearful power of that one little cause

> ——"Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
> Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
> Brought death into the world and all her woe."

But 6th. By another cause, equally unobtrusive and seemingly inadequate, results as great, as vast, as wide-spread, as enduring and as glorious as those flowing from the one last adverted to are disastrous, have been brought about—for,

If by the disobedience of one the many were made sinners, it is also true that, by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

After the world had, for many long ages, been lying in darkness and in guilt, the shades of moral pollution deepening on every side, there did appear, at length, one man upon earth, whose life was faultless—whose wisdom was matchless—his purity unimpeachable, and whose sufferings, too, notwithstanding his excellence, were rare, unexampled, and to him fatal! Jesus of Nazareth, a dweller in Galilee, and for years traversing the hills and valleys of Judea, visiting its cities, and villages, and places of public resort, is distinguished not only as a teacher of the ignorant, a benefactor to the afflicted, and a pattern of every virtue, but he is presented to us in the amazing relation of the Redeemer of men—the Saviour of the world. In the doings of that one distinguished person, the majesty of heaven, the honor of God's government, and the safety of a world perishing in guilt, are all deeply involved. It is by the spotless excellency of this one person that the wisdom and the authority of the divine law broken by man, are vindicated! It is through his bitter sufferings that the justice of God maintained its honor, while mercy steps forth to rescue the guilty. It is through HIS DEATH that life is spread to the perishing. However inadequate may, at first view, appear the means employed, it is nevertheless true, and it accords to the general mode of procedure under the divine government. On the movements of the one man, Jesus Christ, were suspended the destinies of a world. Had he failed in any one point, the darkness of irremediable condemnation had settled on our entire race.

As it is, by his spotless excellence we have not only a bright pattern presented for our imitation in life, but through his blood pardon is by us attainable—through his death eternal life is secured; so that, the doings of this one individual have brought life and immortality to light, and have completely changed the prospects of the whole human race for all coming ages. The work is accomplished: it is fully completed; not a shadow of a doubt can rest upon the question; redemption has been achieved for man by Jesus Christ; pardon and a title to eternal joys in heaven are offered to men however sinful. The boon is freely offered. It has been gained by thousands, and by tens of thousands. Multitudes now on earth are *rejoicing* in the firm conviction that this boon is theirs even now—

that after a few more years here spent in patient efforts to grow in goodness, they will enter the climes of perfect purity and perfect peace, to dwell there forever. Multitudes now in heaven are surrounding the eternal throne in "the conscious possession of a renovated nature, purified affections, and bliss that is boundless and that shall be eternal!" Aye! in heaven itself, the songs of triumphant thanksgiving to God and the Lamb, (we can almost hear those rapturous sounds as we sit wrapt in devout meditation!) ascribe this amazing result to the doings of Jesus on earth. "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood; be glory, dominion, and honor forever!"

But once more, 7th. The means still employed to elevate the moral condition of men are equally characteristic!

It may seem a very small matter that a mother, surrounded by her little ones, watches over them in their sports, heals their little differences, soothes their jealousies, corrects their mistakes, and encourages them with judicious care, to check their tempers, to love the truth, to be kind to one another, to forbear vengeance, and to forgive injuries, imagined or real. Yet small as the matter may appear, this is the process, simple and hidden from the world's view though it be, by which the foundation of all that is noble in principle, dignified in character, and beneficial in conduct, is laid. And to the neglect of this quiet, early discipline, may be traced the instances of gross vice and wild disorder and selfishness, that now and then startle us in the current of life, and spread a poisonous influence far and wide.

It is by imparting knowledge, fortifying the principles and awakening to healthful action the conscience of man, individually, that preparation must be made for the production of right conduct, of great actions, and of characters, and of deeds that shall bless mankind!

So also, in the great enterprise of staying the ravages of sin in society, and recovering a world back to its allegiance to God!

No great array of startling means is employed for this purpose —no lightnings break from heaven, shivering the cover that hides from view the pit of despair—no thunders roll on high, proclaiming the terrors of God's wrath against the wicked—no powerful monarchs are commissioned to treat with men in the name of heaven; no! but the one single instrumentality selected is that of preaching the gospel—of telling men in the plainest manner, and in simple terms, the story of redeeming love, and inviting them to turn to God and live!

The world is arrayed on one side with its pomp, its power, its wealth, its pleasures—with its wisdom, its learning, its fascinating delusions. On the other side, stands the messenger of salvation, pointing to the declarations of eternal truth; pointing to the offer of pardon through the blood of Jesus, and beseeching men to be reconciled to God—to turn from their follies and their sins, and live! The powerful may look down with contempt, the wise may turn away, the gay may dance by unheeding, and the vicious may scoff! but this simple means has been found amply sufficient!

From the very first, the passions, the prejudices, the interests, and the ancient and cherished superstitions of man were all opposed to the success of the gospel; but in vain. It was first proclaimed in the face of powerful, determined, and organized opposition. But it gained a foothold in society, notwithstanding, and spread its influence, and it has held on its way, onward, onward ever since. The Grecian philosophers mocked when they heard Paul expounding the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the dead!

The Roman magistrate, surrounded by all the pomp of office, as the gorgeous procession in his train swept onwards to celebrate some splendid rite in the temples of their idolatry, might have cast a look of contemptuous pity at the little group of obscure Christians met for worship, and whose hymns in honor of the crucified Nazarene, caught his ear as he passed along. If at all aware of the exclusive character of the religion there taught, he might have smiled in derision at the extravagance of the simple fanatics (as he would probably deem them,) and, glancing his eye proudly at the pageantry around him, and the popularity of the gay mythology he advocated, he might deem it perfectly secure against the influence of a system so obscure, so abhorrent to the prejudices, and so adverse to the cherished indulgences of the powerful people he governed; and yet, ere long, those splendid superstitions tottered and fell before the influence of this new religion, simple as it appeared—unobtrusive as were its movements! So true it is, as an apostle once declared, "God hath chosen foolish things to confound the wise, and weak things to confound the mighty." If he would overthrow the monuments of human industry or power, no boisterous convulsions of nature are needed; the workings of little insects, the silent progress of decay, will be enough. If he would punish a rebellious nation, no powerful armies, no formidable fleets, are needed; luxury and pride within itself will accomplish it. There is, then, with these facts in view, something awful in the communication, "I will be to Ephraim as a moth, and to the house of Judah as rottenness!"

In the operation of the great laws of nature—in the production of striking phenonomena and desolating convulsions of the elements—in the ceaseless production of the vast submarine structures, on which rest the lovely isles of ocean—in the momentous movements of Providence, controlling the affairs of men, and determining the destiny of empires—in the amazing event which rendered this world a theatre of guilt and woe—in the still more astonishing work of redeeming a ruined world, and opening heaven itself to the hopes of mankind—in the ordinary dispensations of Providence towards men individually—in the dispensation of celestial grace through the Son of God—everywhere and in all things we find the truth broadly illustrated, "Great results flow from little causes." The glorious Ruler of the universe accomplishes the results most amazing by means silent, unobtrusive, and seemingly inadequate; truly, then, "there is no searching his understanding!"

From the array of facts now before us, I infer 1st. God's agency is concerned in all events, however minute.

Some persons deem it derogatory to God to suppose that his at-

tention is occupied by little things. In affairs of magnitude he may be interested, but surely not in every little trifle. But, now, this thought is unworthy of God. His mind is so vast and so capacious that it grasps every object with perfect distinctness. His plans are perfect, embracing all events without exception. He is competent to direct all. Not a sparrow falls without Him, and even the very hairs of our heads are all numbered. His plans must embrace all events, for, otherwise, his purposes might be frustrated by some event overlooked as too small for notice, but of which the consequences, (like the circles spreading around the point where a falling pebble meets the surface of the lake,) should continually extend and grow in power as increasing ages move on!

We may infer, again, no event is, properly speaking, insignificant. To us it may appear so, but in reality it is not. The direction taken by a fly may cost the life of the most powerful monarch or the ablest statesmen, and plunge whole nations into the horrors of tedious, bloody warfare! The turn we take in a walk, the selection of a book, the direction we give to a conversation, the merest trifle imaginable may throw us into circumstances that will modify our opinions, give a new impulse to our desires, make for us a powerful friend or an implacable enemy, and give an entirely different tone for good or for evil to our own character, and our whole destiny hereafter. Once more: we discern our need of constant guidance from the Most High. He alone fully understands our position, clearly discerns every danger that threatens us, and appreciates our necessities. He alone has power adequate to protect, and wisdom to guide us aright. If He guard us, no danger can overwhelm us; if He sustain, no force can crush us; if He graciously accord his guidance, we are secure—so, at least, thought the royal bard of Israel: "Uphold me, O Lord, and I shall be safe!"

But, further: it certainly is not irrelative to the subject discussed, and I trust it will not be deemed inappropriate to the occasion if I add: "We hence discern also the propriety and value of prayer!" How foolish we should deem the mariner, who, when approaching a coast dangerous from its numerous shoals and reefs and varying currents, around which, moreover, the vessels of a daring foe are hovering: and the gathering tempest is blackening, should persist in refusing the services of an able and experienced and faithful pilot, ready and eager to conduct him safely through the devious channels. How foolish the military officer, who, hemmed in by a superior force—a force flushed with victory, vigilant, active, and eager for his destruction, while his own supplies were exhausted, and famine stared him in the face, should refuse to avail himself of trusty guides, offering to conduct his harassed bands by retired passes across the hills to join the distant troops hastening to his relief!

Equally foolish, unreasonable, and disastrous it is, for a frail mortal, a child of sin and sorrow, to refuse applying to the Father of mercies for that aid, that support, that guidance, so appropriate to his exigencies—a guidance that may be obtained, and obtained by all through prayer; and without which, events that any hour may bring forth, shall prove deeply disastrous, nay, irremediably fatal!

Do you need pardon? It is obtained in prayer. Do you need consolation in affliction? Prayer yields it. Do you need tranquility of mind and firmness to resist temptation? Prayer, and prayer alone, brings it within your reach. How great a matter a little fire kindleth.

"ONE THING THOU LACKEST."

BY REV. J. M. SHERWOOD.

THIS was said to an inquiring sinner by one that knew. The character of the inquirer, and of him who pronounced the judgment, and all the circumstances of the case, make it a most impressive and instructive record of human experience in the matter of eternal salvation.

Never was the momentous question, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" asked under more favorable circumstances—never did an inquirer seem nearer to the kingdom of heaven—never were hope and promise more suddenly and utterly blighted—never was there a sadder and more appalling sequel to a sinner's period of conviction and seeking after the kingdom of God.

He came to Christ, not with a question of curiosity or casuistry, or strife, but with the one all-embracing and infinitely momentous question, which related to his personal salvation. There was very much in his person and character—very much in his manner of seeking—to warrant hope in his case—almost enough to justify one in pronouncing with certainty upon his salvation. He came with a serious question, and did proper reverence to Jesus Christ. He began to seek religion in early life, for he was yet a young man. He was not above seeking the salvation of his soul, though he was rich—"had great possessions." He was not ashamed to kneel to Christ, and that in the public highway, notwithstanding he was a "ruler." He felt in some in measure the insufficiency of his righteousness, and his need of something more and better to save him, although he was a very moral, and as a Jew, a strictly religious man, and had kept all the commandments of Moses from his youth up. His mind was penetrated with the spirit of humility, and with a profound respect for Christ and serious things, as his manner and whole conduct on this occasion abundantly show. He was, beyond a doubt, an honest seeker after the truth. He came burdened with a most weighty and appropriate question, and was anxious to have it answered; he sought the test of this new teacher who came forth from God; he wanted to know the truth and the whole truth in this case, and he shrunk not from the revelation. And, finally, he was manifestly an earnest seeker after life. For he came "running" to Jesus as if in haste—as if he feared the favorable moment might be lost—as if his mind was wrought up to a high and noble resolve, and his heart impelled by deep conviction. No shame or fear, or sense of guilt could deter him. The spirit of God was no doubt at work in his soul. It was an hour of intense interest and responsibility to that sinner. Behold him prostrate at the feet of Jesus! Hear the anxious inquiry that falls from his lips! Listen to the kind and gracious words of Jesus, directing a lost and inquiring sinner into the way of life everlasting.

And is such an one wanting? Shall he at last come short, and perish with the silly and stupid multitude? Having reached the very entrance-gate of salvation, will he turn back and give over seeking? O, the poverty of creature happiness! the insufficiency of creature goodness! the weakness of creature resolves! the uncertainty of creature promise and hope in their best estate! ONE THING THOU LACKEST. Not yet perfect. One important step still to be taken. One test more to be applied. Ah, and that one thing was everything to him; to make him perfect he needed the righteousness of Christ, of which he was entirely destitute; the step to be taken involved the chief sacrifice in his following Christ; the test to be applied would show his utter insufficiency, and blast in death his high-raised hopes, and all his prospects of eternal life.

"Go thy way; sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross and follow me." Jesus knew what constituted that man's IDOL—the real and main difficulty to be met by him in the prosecution of his great inquiry—and he laid his hand upon that idol, and pointed to the required preliminary sacrifice. With a master-hand he laid bare the secrets of that youthful, hoping, and self-confident heart—discovered to him the strength of its love of the world, and the weakness of its outpourings after eternal life with God; and in a moment his radical deficiency of character comes out—he cannot endure the light and demands of that higher revelation which he sought—his resolution fails him—and all is lost. "And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved; for he had great possessions." His "great possessions" were his ruin. He loved them more than he loved God, or eternal life, and he knew it not till now. The requirement of Jesus Christ was more than he could perform. He came to Jesus, but he followed not after him. He inquired to know the way of life, and being tought it, turned his back upon it. He began early to seek the kingdom of God, and when he was just ready to enter it, he suddenly and forever abandoned the pursuit. We hear no more of him. Such a season of conviction and solicitude and blessed opportunity never returned. He perished, probably, with his much-loved wealth.

This melancholy case flashes a light of warning full in our face. Let every man test his religion, test his love to God, test his hope of heaven by the broad rules and the severe principles of the gospel. Above all, having come to Christ with the great question of salvation, let us open our hearts to his searching scrutiny—meet his demands by a full surrender—and neither turn away from him, nor disobey his word, for the wealth and crown of the world.

XXIII.

PRIMITIVE MODE OF EVANGELIZATION.

BY REV. CLEMENT LONG, D.D.,

PROFESSOR IN WESTERN RESERVE COLLEGE.

"And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."—Acts v. 42.

The apostles did not confine their labors at Jerusalem to public preaching on one day in seven. They seem to have thought it important thoroughly to evangelize the metropolis of their own nation. Jerusalem had enjoyed more religious light than any other city. But the apostles did not act as if it was a duty of equal love to raise all other cities to the same level in point of religious knowledge, before any further effort should be made for the spiritual good of Jerusalem. Nor did they think it was enough that the Gospel was *accessible* to the people. They believed it was their duty, if we may judge from their conduct, to proclaim the word of life in the already highly favored city of Jerusalem daily, and *in every house.*

If we were called to determine what they ought to have done, without information concerning the course they did in fact pursue, we might conceive that an enlarged benevolence should have directed them to tarry but a short time in any one place, since there were but few laborers, and the field was the world; that they should rather have passed rapidly from town to town, lifting up their voice in public assemblies, so as to give opportunity for all to hear; and thus should have carried the Gospel to the greatest possible number, and made a more equal distribution of its blessings. Before the period to which reference is had in the text, multitudes had been converted in the first scene of their labors. Three thousand persons had been added to the Church on the day of Pentecost; soon after, the number of the disciples had risen to five thousand; and we read that, a little later, "believers were the more added to the Lord, *multitudes* both of men and women." We might suppose that from this prosperous beginning the good work could have gone forward without the apostles, and that they were wanted more in other places. But so did not the apostles themselves determine. They began to preach to their own countrymen; they preached daily; they *carried the Gospel to the houses of the people.*

The example of the apostles, if it is not in itself decisive, may assist us to form an opinion concerning the degree and kind of spiritual culture which should be bestowed on these United States. I take the position, that *the claims of the Gospel ought to be pressed on the attention of every individual.*

This statement, considered apart from the spiritual state of the world, secures the approbation of all who love the soul and the cause of Christ. But it may be doubted whether, taking into account the religious wants of other portions of the globe, and the inadequacy of the existing means, such a degree of thoroughness in our evangelization of this country as I contend for, is admissible. If it should be granted that Christians ought at once to raise the means for sending the Gospel to every individual of *all* nations, it may be questioned whether, while they neglect or fail to do this, the existing instrumentality should be so applied as my proposition will demand. This is the point of my inquiry; it should have a candid investigation. Ought the *means now in use*, or *practically available*, for the extension of the kingdom of Christ, to be so employed that the Gospel shall be carried to every individual of our American population, and pressed on his attention?

In answer to this inquiry, I would say:

I. That it is right and best to make a special effort to supply the religious wants of our population.

The example of the apostles removes all objection to this course, on the ground that it indicates partiality and a disregard of the law of equal love. The spiritual destitution of the world was greater then than now. But these inspired men tarried in Jerusalem till many thousands were converted, and they were so particular in their application of the truth as to carry the Gospel to private houses. If so great thoroughness as this, in the work of evangelization, did not evince undue partiality for their countrymen, and a want of general benevolence, neither would a special effort in behalf of the spiritual interests of America, be charged on the Christians of this country as an exhibition of uncharitableness and selfishness.

The supposition cannot be entertained, that the apostles were acting, in this instance, under the influence of a Jewish prejudice. They were following the instructions of their Master. When he sent forth the twelve to preach during his life, he said to them: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." And when, at his ascension, he enlarged their commission, charging them to "go into all the world and preach," he taught them that they must *begin at Jerusalem.* And that the apostles considered themselves as performing a solemn duty when they gave the Jews a preference over the Gentiles, we see in the conduct of Paul and Barnabas on one occasion, when they met with opposition from their countrymen. They said: "It was *necessary* that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it far from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." We

find that Paul, in accordance with this view of his duty, always preached first in the synagogue of the Jews, when he commenced his labors in a heathen city.

This apostle thought it necessary to refute the objection to his doctrine of justification by faith alone, that the Jew would then have no advantage over the Gentile. (Rom. iii. 1.) He evidently supposed, that if such an inference could fairly be drawn from the doctrine, it would be a serious objection. He, therefore, affirmed that the Jews had preëminence in many respects, but chiefly because the oracles of God were committed to them.

He had a special desire for the salvation of his own countrymen. No language can express a stronger interest of one man in another than that which he used concerning the spiritual welfare of the Jews. "I could wish," he said, "that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." He would willingly lose the blessedness of a follower of Christ, if that would avail to their conversion. The language of passion is not to be too literally interpreted; but he certainly meant to say, that he would gladly make any sacrifice for their salvation. This peculiar interest of the apostle in the Hebrews was partly the consequence, as he intimates, of his relation to them. They were his "kinsmen according to the flesh." We may justify a special regard for the welfare of our own people by his example. But his anxiety on their account was partly also the effect of the favor they had already received from God. To them, as he said, "pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; and of them, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever." This was high distinction. But the apostle did not feel that the preëminence of the Hebrews in the matter of religious privilege was a reason why no more effort should be made for their spiritual good, and that it would be a breach of the law of equal love to bestow on them further religious culture. Their superiority over others, as the chosen people of God, was the very reason why he was willing to suffer everything that they might be saved. He could not bear that those who had been thus exalted, should fall from the high eminence to which God had raised them. It is right, therefore, to desire, with special earnestness, the salvation of such as have had uncommon religious advantages. We ought to seek the spiritual welfare of our country, both because it is the land where our friends and kindred dwell, and because the want of an elevated religious character in a people so highly favored as we, will be just cause for the deepest sorrow.

The Gospel sanctifies, but it does not eradicate, our natural affections. Nay, it is mentioned as one of the effects of human *depravity*, in the epistle to the Romans, that men were "without natural affection," and this defect is there classed with sins of the darkest hue. And if an exhibition of natural affection is ever allowable, what form should it sooner take than that of solicitude for the religious character of those who are dear to us? Not to supply the temporal wants of our friends is wholly inconsistent with the principles of the Gospel. "If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own

house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." He makes a wide departure from the spirit of the Gospel, who omits suitable provision for the necessities of those whom nature and circumstances have made dependent on him. The sentiment may justly be applied to the case of our town, our county, our state, and our country, but with increasing emphasis as the circle of charity is contracted. If there are persons in our immediate vicinity who are in want of the necessaries of life, and we neglect to relieve them, it will not serve us for a valid excuse, that we have sent our bread to the poor in other lands. It is our duty, at all events, to care for those who are near to us. They are "our own" poor. If any provide not the necessaries of this life "for his own," he hath denied the faith. But it is surely more inconsistent with the spirit of the Gospel to withhold the Gospel itself from the community in which we live, than to refuse to minister to the wants of the poor. And it will not excuse the omission of duty in respect to the religious wants of our countrymen, that we have sent our missionaries to the heathen. We ought, doubtless, to send our missionaries to the heathen; but if, for this purpose, we leave unsupplied the religious destitutions at home, we show that our piety is not of the same type with that of Paul. It is taken for granted in the Scriptures, as a thing which ought to be expected, that our affections will be the most powerfully attracted towards those with whom we have the closest outward relations. Thus the beloved disciple asks: "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath *seen*, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?"

But not to insist on the superior claims to our charity of those with whom, by nature and situation, we are the most closely allied, it may be contended that a wise regard to the religious interests of the world at large, should prompt us to special effort in behalf of the spiritual welfare of this country. Our Lord knew well what was the best mode of proceeding in reference to the general prevalence of his cause, and he was disposed to carry it into practice. None of his true followers will be inclined to boast, that they have a more sincere, or a more enlightened philanthropy than he. He required his disciples to preach to none but "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" in their first missionary tour; and when, at last, he commanded them to evangelize all nations, he instructed them to begin at home. And we have seen how the apostles understood their instructions. The Hebrews had been selected from all other people to enjoy peculiar light; they had been under religious training for ages, while the rest of the world was left in the darkness of nature. Yet our Lord directed that the Gospel should first be preached to them. They were to have this advantage, it would seem, *because* they had already received so much religious instruction. We may conclude that we shall do no injustice to the world, if we use special exertions to evangelize Christian America.

Our Saviour has not given the sanction of his authority to the mathematical interpretation of the law of equal love. And it is clear, from other considerations, that an objection to special efforts for the evangelization of our country cannot be sustained on the ground that we shall then do more for ourselves than for others. Should we

undertake, in obedience to the dictates of an unenlightened conscience, an equal distribution of the means of grace among mankind, we should not only cease to add to the instrumentalities now employed in Christian countries, but we should pull down what for so many years we have been laboring to build up. To place ourselves as speedily as possible on a level with the heathen, we must suspend the cultivation of the home-field till an equal amount of labor had been bestowed on the wilderness. And as there are degrees of moral degradation among the heathen themselves, it would not consist with the law of love to man, mathematically interpreted, to begin *their* instruction with the more enlightened and the better-off, but we must lend our aid first to the lowest on the scale. He who does not feel prepared wholly to reverse the present order of things in the application of the means of grace, cannot make it an objection to a special effort for the evangelization of this country, that it is contrary to the law of equal love.

The kingdom of heaven is like leaven. It must diffuse itself from certain centres. The parts nearest to these centres will be leavened first. It is not in the power of man, with all the requisite pecuniary resources, to establish it at one and the same moment in all places. It is wrong to make the attempt. We are bound to obey those laws of religious progress which Heaven has established. There is harmony between our natural affections and our duty in this instance. The world will be the most surely and rapidly evangelized, if we bestow the most abundant labor on those spots which have been the most highly cultivated in past time.

Jerusalem was a centre of religious influence in the days of the apostles. And we may conceive that this was one of the reasons why they were instructed to begin the publication of the Gospel in this city. The Jews residing in all parts of the world, often visited the holy city. There were at Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost, "Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven." A publication of the Gospel there, at that time, was equivalent to a publication of it in all parts of the Roman empire. The foreign Jews, converted on the day of Pentecost, afterwards acted the part of evangelists in the countries where they resided.

The same spirit of enterprise which existed among the Jews in the age of the apostles, prevails among the people of these United States. Americans are found sojourning or residing in every nation under heaven. Wherever there is an opening for trade, or the exercise of invention or skill, or the introduction of a new and profitable business, they are present. Were they in fact Christians, as they are called, Christianity would be carried, without the aid of missionary associations, to every country on the globe.

The intercourse of America with foreign nations will be much more frequent in coming years, with the increase of our population and of the productiveness of our industry. The improvement which is constantly taking place in our instruments of locomotion, will contribute immeasurably to the same result. Whatever our country is, in point of religious character, it will be known to be all over the world—it

truly Christian, it will be recognized as such, and will diffuse abroad a Christian influence. It would not then, by any means, infringe the law of charity toward mankind, to put forth special exertions for the evangelization of nominally Christian America.

There is one respect, indeed, in which the United States is differently situated from the land of Palestine at the time of the apostles, in reference to the matter under discussion. Foreigners were not flocking to that country by hundreds of thousands in a year, there to take up their permanent abode. Here is a reason for particular attention to the spiritual improvement of our population, which did not exist in the case of the ancient Hebrews. A sufficient number of persons enter our borders from abroad every year, and become incorporated with our people, to form a respectable state. The addition to our population by immigration in the year 1848, amounted to a quarter of a million. In 1849 it was probably a hundred thousand more than this. The increase by immigration in a single year, exceeds the population of Connecticut at the present time; and at the present ratio of representation, would be entitled to five representatives in Congress. There are as many as ten States of this Union whose numbers are less than the immigration which pours into this country in one year. It is estimated that in the next ten years, the influx of foreigners will amount to four millions. Is it our duty to carry the Gospel to the destitute in foreign lands, and is it not our duty—a duty devolving on *us*, and which no other nation can, or ought to perform in our stead—to give the Gospel to the people of foreign lands, when they throng our thoroughfares, and make their homes by our sides?

But, furthermore, these immigrants do not at once break off all connection with those whom they leave behind. Each one of them is bound by ties of intimacy to one or more persons who remain in the country whence he came. The attachment to their native country will indeed be stronger in some than in others. The German love of the father-land is not soon eradicated. A difference of language contributes to the power of former associations over the mind of the immigrant. But all will remember with interest the place of their birth, and scenes of their earlier joys and sorrows, cares and labors, and the friends from whom they have parted. The millions who have come to our land in search of new homes, will be connected by the bonds of kindred or friendship with other millions abroad. A correspondence, by letter and otherwise, will be kept up between them. As the facilities of intercourse with foreign countries increase from year to year, particularly when the penny-postage system shall be adopted by sea and land, communication between our immigrant population and the countries of Europe from which they came, will be more frequent. In this manner America will sustain the closest relations with the people of that continent. Having derived her existence from one of the European nations, and having adopted as her children so many of the native citizens of others, she must be to them an object of peculiar interest. Whatever may be the feelings of the rulers of those nations, the people must cherish *sentiments* of regard for us as their kinsmen. We know that they

do in fact sympathize with us, and that they are happy in the knowledge that we sympathize with them. The Irish, Germans, Italians, and others, desire the blessings of good government, because their brethren in this country enjoy the protection of equal laws.

In these facts we have a reason peculiar to this country, why an effort should be made to give the gospel to our whole population. We cannot but exert a powerful influence as a nation, over the character and destiny of Europe. Millions of our citizens will be personally known to some who are there. Our institutions, the practical working of our government, the manners, morals, and religion of our people, will be interesting subjects of inquiry to them. If we hold up the light of divine truth in our lives, it will be seen abroad. There is no nation at present, there never was a nation so happily situated as ours, for diffusing, far and wide, a good religious influence. If none should go forth from this country for the express purpose of carrying the gospel to other nations, our influence as a Christian people would be felt. But a truly Christian nation *will* send out missionaries. The missionary spirit will be active in proportion as the desire is intense for the evangelization of our own country. And a missionary enterprise which has hitherto languished will, I feel certain, take its proper place, ere long, beside those which have for their object the supply of the destitutions at home, and the conversion of the heathen. I refer to the incipient and feeble effort to propagate a pure Christianity in Europe. The providence of God points most evidently to America as the country which should take the lead in this enterprise. The gospel is here preached and held in as great purity, at least, as in any other country. And we claim kindred with almost every nation of Europe. There runs in the veins of millions of our people, the blood of various races on that continent. The society or societies which will hereafter divide with our home missionary and foreign missionary boards, the regards of the American churches, will find suitable men to send as missionaries to every part of Europe, among some portion of our population; but then we must have a flourishing state of religion at home, that those who may have in other respects suitable qualifications, may be seized with the missionary spirit, and may count it an honor to be sent abroad as ambassadors for God. Special efforts must be made for the conversion both of our native, and our naturalized and foreign population, that they may be prepared, like the foreign Jews at Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost, to go back to the countries whence they or their fathers came with the gospel of Christ.

It is not, then, the dictate of a selfish policy, that we should feel peculiar anxiety about the religious interests of the United States. The instructions of our Saviour, and the conduct of the apostles, are our warrant for giving priority to the claims of our own people as objects of Christian charity. And it also appears as rational as it is scriptural, to do more for Christian America than for other countries; or, rather, it appears to be the best and the most expeditious method of doing good to the world, to relieve as fast as possible the spiritual wants of our own land.

It might be added to what has been said of the relations of this country to Europe, that a decline of piety at home must inevitably be followed by *embarrassment in our missionary boards*. And this is not theory. The secretaries of these boards know well that it has been a sorrowful fact more than once. A few years ago the American Board found it necessary to curtail its operations for want of funds. This was after a time of ruinous and sinful speculation, in which the church was too deeply involved. The same society is now laboring under a debt from which it emerges but slowly. It cannot avail itself of the advantages it has already gained to carry out its extended plans. It can hardly sustain itself at its present rate of expenditure. It is constantly a little in advance of its means. The mighty stream of emigration to California, and other schemes for accumulating wealth without industry, show what is the idol of the people, and why the treasury of the Lord is not filled. And there is likewise a deficiency of laborers. The number of pious young men is decreasing; and of those who are pious a smaller proportion devote themselves to the work of the ministry and of missions.

The remedy for these embarrassments in the operations of our foreign missionary societies, is a deeper spirit of piety at home. The persons to whom the management of these societies is committed do sometimes assure us, indeed, that if the churches were more engaged in the cause of foreign missions, there would be more piety at home. And in a certain sense this is true. The existence of a warmer interest in missions would be an *evidence* of an improved state of religion among us; and Christian benevolence, prompted by this deeper interest in religion, would doubtless react upon and assist in sustaining the spirit of piety. But real devotion to Christ, it must be confessed, does not begin at our fingers' ends, to enter thence into our hearts. True religion does not commence in some work of our hands, and end in the conversion of our souls. The good fruits of righteousness do not bear the root. "A good man out of the good treasure of his *heart* bringeth forth good things." When the grace of God was bestowed in an extraordinary degree on the churches of Macedonia, and "in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy, and their deep poverty, abounded unto the riches of their liberality," and "they besought Paul with much entreaty" that he would carry their gift to the poor saints at Jerusalem; they "first gave their own selves to the Lord," and then to Paul in obedience to "the will of God." And this was the true and proper order of these acts of consecration: the spirit of piety must first be in the soul, sanctifying the whole man for the Lord, and then in the overt act of performing deeds of charity. It ought not to be expected that America will do what she ought for the heathen, till she first gives herself to the Lord. Were it our *main object* to publish repentance and remission of sins among all nations, it would be best to *begin* at Jerusalem. Could another day of Pentecost be enjoyed in the American church, and Jesus Christ be preached from house to house in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, a new impulse would be given to the cause of missions.

Secondly. One special effort for the spiritual good of the United States, *should take the form of a presentation of the word and truth of God to every individual.*

We have the authority of the Scriptures for this sentiment. The apostles ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ from house to house.

That very command of our Lord which requires us to "preach the Gospel to every creature," refers as much to the *personal* application of truth, as to the extent of territory which should be evangelized. We must carry the Gospel to individual men as well as to all places. There are persons in the midst of this community who never hear the Gospel. The same authority which obliges us to carry the Gospel to India or Africa, binds us to preach it to those in our immediate neighborhood who never hear it. It is preposterous to send missionaries half round the globe, and leave a part of those "creatures" to whom we are commanded to "preach," perishing in ignorance and sin on our right hand and on our left.

It will not excuse such an omission of duty, that the Gospel is *accessible* to our population, and they can hear it if they will. If this was strictly true, the command to preach the Gospel to every creature in this part of the world would not have been fulfilled. Multitudes of our fellow-citizens do not feel their need of the Gospel, and will not come to our places of religious worship; they will not purchase and read the Bible of their own accord, and thus become the means of awakening in themselves an interest in the public ordinances of religion. The benevolence of religion will not permit us to say, that they ought then to go without the Gospel. This would be just, one might contend: they do not *deserve* that further trouble and expense should be incurred on their account. But God in the Gospel does not treat men according to their deserts. Who of *us* deserved that the Lord Jesus Christ should be at so much pains and expense for our salvation? Ours is a religion of mercy. It is because all are ill-deserving, and might in strict justice be left to suffer for their sins, that we have any Gospel to preach. He who has prepared the way for the publication of a Gospel of grace by the sacrifice of himself, expects his Gospel to be preached in the same spirit of self-sacrifice. As towards the author of our salvation, who has bought us with his blood, it is just and obligatory that we proclaim the good news of pardon by Christ in unwilling ears. If men do not come into our religious assemblies to hear it, we must carry it out into the highways and hedges. We must entreat men in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God.

If it should be objected to this view of our duty, that we are only required by our Lord to *preach* the Gospel, let it be considered that preaching in the New Testament sense of that word, is not necessarily that formal presentation of truth which we now designate by the term. He was a preacher, in the time of the apostles, who lifted up his voice in any public place, as in the streets of a city, and drew to himself the attention of the passengers. When our missionaries in Madras stand at the gate of their residences and address a few words

to any who may pass, concerning the faith in Christ, they are fulfilling the command to "preach." In the text the apostles are said to have "preached" in private houses; and it is said of Philip in the Acts, (viii. 35,) that he "preached" to an *individual*. The object of preaching is not to make a public harangue, but to produce in the mind of the hearer a certain effect; when this can be done only by mere private address, we act in the spirit of our Lord's command when we employ this mode of communication. The formal and public presentation of the truth at stated times and places, for very obvious reasons, can never be discontinued. The speaker would be among the last to propose any substitute for the labors of an educated, settled, and permanent ministry. But the whole duty of preaching the Gospel has not been performed, when it has been proclaimed to such as have come to the public religious assembly for the express purpose of hearing it. The apostles did not think that their duty was discharged when they had spoken in the place where men usually congregated for religious purposes. And they were probably impelled to carry the Gospel to private houses by a constraining feeling of love for man and for Christ, rather than by a mere sense of duty.

Our circumstances are, in some respects, quite different from those of the early Christians—a fact which renders the personal application of divine truth even more obligatory upon us than it was upon them. The Gospel was then new, and it had the *attraction* of novelty. Great numbers were dissatisfied with the existing religions, and desired a change. Many were in an attitude of expectation. Christianity was, moreover, introduced by signs and wonders. For these reasons the apostles were waited on by throngs of eager listeners. On one day three thousand were converted. The Christians, it is related, had favor with all the people. When the lame man was healed at the gate of the temple, all the people ran together unto Peter and John. Afterwards it is stated that the people "magnified" them. When the apostles were arrested for persisting in their work, the captain of the temple and the officers brought them before the council "without violence, because they feared the people." The attention of the people of Jerusalem generally was favorably directed towards them: "Ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine," said the High Priest, "and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." Such an excitement as this, occurring now in the city of New-York, setting aside the consideration of the miracle connected with it, would be a matter of talk and inquiry through the whole country. Nor was the interest in the Gospel confined to the Jews. Wherever Paul preached among the Gentiles, he seems to have drawn to himself the attention of the people generally. The movements of the apostles were noticed and closely observed. On one occasion it was said of him and his associates: "These that have turned the *world* upside down, are come hither also."

Very different is the case with us at present. Men are far enough from being beside themselves with religious frenzy. They attend upon the ordinances of religion, so far as they do attend, too generally, with a feeling of indifference, and they absent themselves with a

disrelish which is little more positive than indifference. The facts of the Gospel were mighty when they were recent. "With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection." But this fact, and other facts of which it is the proof, although they deserve the attention of every age as much as that of the apostles, are now regarded by the many with the same coldness, almost, as any event of a remote antiquity. It is therefore much more necessary for us than it was for the first Christians, to bring the Gospel home to individuals and urge it on their thoughts, that they may be induced and prepared to attend with interest and profit on the public ordinances of religion. Jews and Gentiles would go to hear the apostles preach without solicitation. Their preaching was the wonder of the day. Here there is a large proportion of the population who will not come to our churches of their own accord. There is no other way but to search them out and compel them to come in. The Spirit of God has as much power now as he ever had; but our circumstances are different, and our means must consequently be varied. When Christianity was first introduced, supernatural means had to be employed. Now it has obtained a footing in the world, and it is suitable that the labors of the people of God should take the place of supernatural means. The engagement of the attention, and the impression of the mind, so far as it is made to depend on the use of means, once accomplished by the miraculous facts of the Gospel, should now be effected through the instrumentality of Christian effort.

The importance of the stated preaching of the Gospel cannot be too highly estimated. But it can affect, directly, only so many as present themselves in the house of God. There is, in every parish where the Gospel is statedly and publicly preached, a missionary field, in respect to which the command to preach to every creature may be more appropriately applied, if possible, than in respect to pagan nations. This missionary work is not a substitute for public instruction on the Sabbath, nor can there be any interference between the two methods of promoting the cause of Christ. On the contrary, the presentation of the truth to individuals must be an aid to the public labors of the ministry. It will increase the number of attendants on public worship, and with the blessing of God, the number of members of the churches. If there is collision anywhere, it will be between the different religious denominations.

But the fear of incurring the charge of proselytism, must not deter Christians from the effort to evangelize our whole population. Our division into sects, when it renders us jealous of all attempts to convert those who are not embraced within the limits of our parishes, is a departure from the true faith and the true church, and the worst kind of heresy. The consequence of regard for this sectarian jealousy will be, that we shall value at a higher rate the prosperity of our denominations than the cause of Christ, and through fear of giving offence to some branch of the church, shall resign to the kingdom of Satan those who might be saved. We shall sacrifice the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom to the supposed interests of rival sects. What would this be, but that "heresy" which Paul connects with

"hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife," and "seditions," and which he denominates "works of the flesh," and opposes to "the fruit of the Spirit?" A large proportion of our population in every part of the country, but particularly in the West, have none to care for their souls. Christian truth has little more direct influence over their minds than if they were pagans. They are near enough to the light to have an increased amount of responsibility, but not near enough to receive actual moral benefit from their situation. They could place themselves under the influence of divine truth, but they do not; Christians do not carry them the Gospel; and the consequence is, that they perish in the midst of a land of Bibles and Sabbaths. If any denomination of Christians which has essential, saving truth, should seek to bring these wandering sheep within their fold, let us bid them "God speed." There is not so strong a spirit of rivalry among us, I should hope, that we should prefer none would enter heaven, unless they found admission through the doors of our denomination.

Besides, we can easily avoid the temptation to regard with jealousy denominational attempts to extend the influence of Christian truth. The kind of effort to which I refer can be made by all our evangelical denominations in common. It need not be prosecuted with reference to the connection of individuals with any one of our congregations. All who love the Bible can unite in an effort to place it in the hands of those who do not possess it. There is no proselytism in this. The Bible distributor can converse seriously with the neglecter of Gospel ordinances concerning the interests of his soul, without introducing the subject of baptism, or episcopacy, or methodism, or presbyterianism. He can leave with him a tract in which every allusion to denominational peculiarities shall be omitted. He can pray with him in language which becomes the mouth of every penitent sinner, whether he be of one order or another. Such a union of action has been found practicable; it should be encouraged. Let us coöperate as far as we are able, and where we must separate, let us separate with good-will. Above all things, let us not cherish a *spirit* of separation. Let us rejoice when any wandering soul returns to Christ, whatever form of Christianity he may think fit to assume.

Without that individual application of the Gospel for which I contend, there is reason to apprehend that infidelity will become generally prevalent.

The Gospel is not, like one of the necessaries of this life, an article in general demand, which men will seek if it be not carried to them. Men naturally hate the light, and they will not come to the light, lest their deeds should be reproved. The Gospel is wanted to enlighten the very power which should judge of its worth, and to waken in the soul a sense of its own spiritual necessities. Men are inclined, either from aversion or stupidity, to absent themselves from the ordinances of religion. The neglect of the means of grace will become general among those who do not feel a personal interest in divine things, when it ceases to be disreputable not to attend upon them. And this will happen, when religion ceases to be aggressive, and the church is con-

tented just to maintain the position she has won. When the number of the pious diminishes by death, and their places are unsupplied by new recruits from among the unbelievers, public sentiment will be formed by the ungodly, and will be shaped according to their wishes. What is reputable and disreputable will then be determined by the opposers of religion. We must not be satisfied with opening places of worship where the people may hear the word of God, if such shall be their pleasure. We must carry the Gospel to them individually; we must, if possible, awaken in their minds a feeling of their need of salvation; we must set before them inducements sufficient to bring them to the house of God. Only thus shall we secure that a majority of our American population do not become infidel, or, I should rather say, atheistic, in sentiment and practice. As a nation, we may be "without God in the world," if the method of extending the influence of the Gospel now insisted on, be not more thoroughly prosecuted by the church.

Not more than one seventh part of our whole population is included in churches which, by the utmost stretch of charity, can be regarded as evangelical. Can it be supposed that more than two sevenths, in addition to the church members, attend on the public services of religion? A majority of the people of this country, it is probable, live without instruction in the saving truths of the Gospel. The consequence of this state of things, if not speedily corrected, must be the deepest moral debasement. From long absence from the house of God, and never hearing the names of God and the Saviour uttered except in blasphemy, our people may come to think that there is nothing more in our religion than in the idle dreams of superstition. They may lose their faith in any reality but that which strikes their senses. They may take a step beyond the unbelief of the speculative infidel, who feels it to be necessary to maintain his opposition to Christianity by reason. Exclusive occupancy of the mind for months and years with the interests of the present world, may induce utter forgetfulness of God. They may lose all apprehension of his existence, much more of his holy spiritual law, and of their need of salvation through Jesus Christ. It may be a thing of course with them that there is nothing better for a man than present enjoyment, nothing worse than the suffering and death of the body.

With this stupid infidelity, there will be united, in the case of great numbers, disregard of the laws of morality. A life of virtue is the happiest life; but men whose whole object is the attainment of earthly happiness, are, with difficulty, persuaded of it. Strong temptation overpowers their faith. A present enjoyment appears to them more desirable than the avoidance of a future, and (in their view) uncertain evil. They will sooner incur any risk than suffer an irksome self-denial. They blind themselves to the most obvious consequences of their vices, through the influence of unlawful desire. They act with the utmost fool-hardiness, often. They hope the laws of nature will be changed to accommodate their wishes. The laws of evidence, they imagine, will be suspended to favor their concealment. Effects, which to themselves appear inevitable the moment an action is done,

in the heat of passion, seem quite improbable. Let a sense of religion cease to influence the community, and worldly interest become the sole restraining principle, and vice and crime, in every form, would abound.

I may mention here the danger, or rather the certainty, that popular corruption would infuse itself into our government, and that a corrupt government would react upon, and more thoroughly vitiate the morals of the people, if, through the neglect of Christians, those who have the control in our national affairs, the majority, should be infidels or atheists. Our government will be what we, the people, may choose to make it. An irreligious nation will have irreligious rulers. Our national Executive and Legislature will reflect the character of those from whom their power is derived. The blessing of self-government may thus become the bane of its possessors. And how fearful is the responsibility of those who may place in stations of the highest civil authority men who will not hesitate, for some sinister purpose, to trample on the laws of the land, and the principles of morality and religion! A person acting in his individual capacity, does injury by unprincipled conduct within a comparatively narrow circle, and with a power of influence comparatively feeble. A person clothed with the authority of President of this republic, who violates his oath of office, or commits an act of flagrant injustice, becomes an example of wickedness to the whole people—an example which is unspeakably more seductive, because it carries with it the vast influence of the highest office in the gift of the people. The party which places the President in his chair, seldom fails to sustain him in all his measures. By the fact of defending his wrong measures, the party participates in the guilt of its President, and shares in his responsibility. Thus, the bad actions of men in high official stations are a thousandfold more corrupting than those of men in private life. The right of self-government is a valuable safeguard; it is also a most solemn trust. Through it the people can inflict on their country an irreparable moral injury. By means of the elective franchise, they can confer on an individual a power of influence to deprave the national morals, equal, I had almost said, to their whole united influence. Through their agent, the President of the Republic, they can unite in perpetrating wickedness on the largest scale.

It is common to insist that our government is in danger of being subverted through the influence of irreligion among our people. Is it not a juster cause for alarm, that the morality of our government may be subverted, and that the government may continue to *stand*, a mighty engine of moral evil? The danger does not seem to me to be at so great a distance that it should excite no apprehension. We choose our rulers by simple majorities. The character of the nation, as a whole, may not be very depraved, and yet the power may be in the hands of the wicked, and it may be abused in the appointment to office of the most unprincipled men. Does the religious community *now* compose so large a proportion of the nation, that it is thought to be important to consult their wishes in the selection of candidates for office? Do they not often feel constrained to sustain such candidates

as are put forward, without regard to their preferences, candidates whom the people will suffer to be elected, but not such as they themselves can approve? We support the "available" candidates, in other words, those whom the war spirit, or the spirit of opposition, or of encroachment, or rapacity, or revolution, will sustain. Our candidates must not be unacceptable to the irreligious many. In selecting between them, we make a choice between evils; we vote for him from whom we have the least to fear. We do not like to take the responsibility of proposing a third candidate, and increasing thus the chances of success of the worst, satisfying ourselves, as well as we can, with the hope that our man, if we should elect him, will, as our agent, and in the public business which we commit to his care, pursue an upright, honorable course. And when our utmost efforts are unavailing, and the people choose to place in the chair of state the most objectionable candidate, as we suppose, we are oppressed with sorrow from the anticipation that some grievous national wrong will be done by him, and we shall suffer moral disgrace and ruin.

It may be thought that Christians could form a Christian party, and, by holding the balance of power, bring one or the other of the two great political divisions of the people to respect their wishes. I should fear that such a party would become corrupt, and dishonor the cause they would espouse. An organized body holding political power, will be courted by persons of ambitious views, who will make the fairest professions for the sake of office. The support of such men would bring discredit on the party, and a stain upon religion. A party which should appeal to the lust for office in a candidate by holding out its support as a lure to his ambition, whatever might be the worth of the end for which it used the person bought by such a bribe, would be already corrupt.

There is a more excellent way. Looking to God for aid, let us undertake what, in the judgment of all, must be a truly Christian enterprise; let us pursue religious ends by religious means; let us seek the conversion of those who have political power in their hands, and the extermination of the cause of our danger: and this, not merely by providing the institutions of the Gospel for those who habitually frequent the house of God, and in whose respect for virtue, and hatred of every wrong and injustice, we feel the most confidence, but by bringing the claims of the Gospel home to the consciences of our whole population. Our only hope is in a thorough evangelization of our country. And this involves the primitive mode of effort, where "*in every house*" the apostles "ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."

XXIV.

THE CLOSING YEAR CONTEMPLATED AND IMPROVED.

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"Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am."—PSALM XXXIX. 4.

THIS must be the prayer of every reflective mind, as we approach the close of this jubilee-year of the nineteenth century. It is a season when almost every one pauses in the whirl of being, to look thoughtfully backward and forward. There are probably few members of a religious congregation, be they young or old, that do not have a time for thinking and resolving at the going out of the old year, and the coming in of a new. None that have been rightly trained will let such an anniversary go by without reviewing the past, and endeavoring to make ready for the future, by girding up the loins of their minds, and committing themselves earnestly to the Divine care and guidance.

It is but the mark of a man with the capacity of looking before and after, to improve such stopping-places and eras of time, for self-examination, calm inquiry into one's life and habits, recapitulation of mercies, repentance for sins, resolutions of amendment, well-doing, and renewed devotion to God. Not so to use these new points of embarkation upon the great sea of probationary existence, is in the highest degree unwise; and it is evidence of a frivolous worldling's mind, and of an unreflecting habit, that ill becomes a being of reason, of memory, and improvement, as man is, and an heir of immortality. At its close, if at no other stage of the year, it becomes us all, looking out upon the great future, to

> "Walk silent, thoughtful, on the solemn shore
> Of that vast ocean we shall sail so soon."

There is nothing more trite, or oftener upon the lips of men, than remarks concerning the swiftness of time, the brevity of life, the uncer-

tainty and transitory nature of all things human—what shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue. But the very commonness of these observations makes the truth contained in them so much the less impressive, for they are often in the mouths of persons that have little sense of them in their hearts. It is easy to say, how short life is, like a vapor that appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away; how we spend our years as a tale that is told; how man, at his best estate, is altogether vanity. And it were easy to multiply illustrations from nature of human frailty, and life's transitoriness, by the morning dew, the fading flower, and the tints of eve.

But it is *not* easy to keep up a practical sense of the shortness and the uncertainty of life—*my* life; the importance and solemnity of *my* probation; the necessity of *my* living so as to be ready at any time to die. David felt the need of calling upon God to teach and impress this upon him, for he could not realize it otherwise: "*Lord*, make me to know mine end; and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am." It is the Lord only that can form in us, by his Spirit, a just appreciation of our latter end. David was a man of action, of business; all his life, except those few quiet pastoral years of his youth, that laid the foundation of his after greatness, he was busy in self-defence, counterworking and baffling his enemies, or struggling for the throne; or else immersed in the cares and burden of the kingdom and crown. In such a state he felt, as every man of business and care must, that God only *could* make him know his end; that he only could keep his mind impressed with a just view of the nearness of life's close, and what was its proper end. It does not mean, what the face of the passage would seem to bear, Lord, make me to know the time I am to die, the number of years I am to live: but make me wisely to consider my latter end, that it is surely coming, and to realize it as near at hand, and to live habitually with reference to it. *So teach me to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto wisdom.*

THAT I MAY KNOW HOW FRAIL I AM. It is always a view of the nearness of our end that makes us feel our frailty. It is when we see death looking us in the face, that we learn how frail we are; and it is a sense of this maintained in the soul that enables us to live in a readiness to die. It is thus that we attain the double end urged in the saying of the ancient, "Live as though you were to die to-morrow—live as though you were to live forever."

The text and the season naturally suggest as the theme of discourse, THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR KEEPING IN MIND THE WINTRY SEASON OF DEATH. This I shall urge by three considerations:

I. That we may be prepared for death.

II. That while we live we may live right for ourselves and for God.

III. That we may be stimulated to make the most of life for doing good.

I. It is important to keep in mind, that we must soon die, in order that we may be prepared to die. Of all the motives that induce men to seek God, and prepare for eternity, the strongest undoubtedly is, the inevitable certainty that they must soon pass, by death, into another world, in which every man's destiny will be fixed, forever, according to the character he has formed in this. Take away this motive, and the number of persons would be small indeed that would be seriously making ready for the world of spirits. And just in proportion as the terms of man's life here should be lengthened, and his liability to accident and disease be diminished, would be his indisposition and delay in preparing for the world to come. It is easy to imagine how fearfully the tide of depravity, in the world before the flood, must have been swollen, by the long course its waves had to run before breaking upon the reefs of eternity—by the lengthened career of sinning individual sinners had, before being brought up by death. The comparative distance of the end of life, the foreseen probability of a long line of years wherein to enjoy the pleasures of this mortal state, joined with the primitive soundness and vigor of the human constitution, brought in such a flood of wickedness upon the old world, that God was compelled to overwhelm it with the flood of water. And when the earth began to be peopled again, the limit of human life was wisely contracted, in order that man might not have so long a period to calculate upon for enjoying the pleasures of sin, and becoming confirmed in habits of alienation from God, and thoughtlessness of eternity.

This was probably one reason in the Divine Mind for limiting our term here to three score and ten. It would not be safe to trust us with a longer lease. The foreseen probability, that we might live here in vigor, one, two, and three centuries, or more, so far from making us live better, and with a wiser reference to the world to come, would undoubtedly be disastrous to our eternal interests, by allowing us to settle down inveterately in habits of worldliness; till, when death at length came, it would find us less ready for the summons than we should have been had that summons been earlier, and our years of probation many less.

Now, the fact being, that our time here is short, that very few of us, if any, are likely to reach even three score and ten, that accident

and sickness in a thousand forms stand ready to cut us down in the midst of our days, it is certainly the part, and one would think it would be the habit of reasonable men, to be seriously preparing for death. The practical effect of a deep *conviction* of our frailty, and that we can not but soon die, *must* be to induce us to be getting ready. And when we see men not getting ready, making no preparation for the event that is absolutely certain, and beyond all comparison the most momentous in the history of our being, the conclusion is irresistible, that such men forget that *they* are soon to die, do not believe that Death is ready to strike *them*. "Man knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them." The delusion is almost universal, which the poet of the Night Thoughts has described so accurately:

> "All men think all men mortal but themselves;
> Themselves, when some alarming shock of Fate
> Strikes through their wounded hearts the sudden dread:
> But their hearts, wounded like the wounded air,
> Soon close; where past the shaft no trace is found.
> As from the wing no scar the sky retains,
> The parted wave no furrow from the keel,
> So dies in human hearts the thought of death."

This common delusion must be prevented by a constant view of death as near at hand, ourselves liable, nay, likely, at any time, to become his prey, if we would realize the vanity of the things of earth, and be preparing every day to quit them. All the means, therefore, we can use to this end, in the improvement of events, times, and seasons, it is wise to avail ourselves of.

II. It is important to keep in mind, that we must individually soon die, and die each alone, in order that we may live right for ourselves and for God. I have put these two together, living right for ourselves and for God, because they are in fact inseparable. We cannot do the one without securing the other, for they are, to every practical intent, the same as identical. Living most singly for the glory of God, is promoting most certainly the truest and highest interests of the man. He that serves best his Maker, does in reality best serve himself also. And he will be likely to do both most effectually, that lives with an habitual reference to death, keeping it always in mind, that his time here is short, and that he may on the very morrow be summoned away.

In every age of the Church those Christians who have served God most faithfully, and who have given all diligence to make their own

calling and election sure, have lived, as it were, all their days with one foot in the grave, almost expecting to die daily. Holy Baxter was such a man, laboring his life long with a feeble constitution, a liability to disease, and almost incessant pains and ailments, that would have prevented an ordinary mind from attempting any thing, and that made him practically feel each day as if it might be his last. And yet how nobly did he live for himself and for God; and with what unwearied industry and success did he pursue life's great end, the good of his fellow-men, and the glory of his God. Who is there too, that has not observed in his own experience, that just in proportion to the felt nearness of death has been his earnestness in devotion, in well-doing, and in serving God? It is not when health is the most vigorous, spirits the most buoyant, prospects of life the brightest, and the expectation of beholding many days, and of seeing much good the most sanguine, it is not then that the Christian lives most above the world, and the flesh, and the nearest to God. But when sickness comes upon a man; when bodily infirmities weigh heavily; when the spirits droop, and life looks clouded, and the world dark and dreary; when thoughts

> "Of the last bitter hour come like a blight
> Over thy spirit, and sad images
> Of the stern agony, and shroud, and pall,
> And breathless darkness, and the narrow house,
> Make thee to shudder, and grow sick at heart,"—

then it is that a man doth gird up the loins of his mind, become sober, and watch unto prayer. Then do we bestir ourselves to forsake folly and vanity, and mind what we are about. Then do we betake ourselves to serious thought and devotion, and holy living, and serving God. Then it is, if all has not been wrong before, if we have not been doing every thing else, (as alas, so many are,) but getting ready to die, so that we can look death in the face, with the composure of a Christian whose peace has been made with God in health; then it is that the soul plumes her feathers for the flight into eternity.

That we may keep our wings, as Christians, poised and ready for such a flight, that they may not flutter and tire if we are called to mount suddenly, we must converse often with death, we must go to the house of mourning, we must entertain the intimations of our mortality, we must purposely lay to heart the lessons of our frailty, which are constantly being taught us, in the changing seasons, and all the discipline of life. Under the moral effect of such lessons we shall be most likely to live right for ourselves and for God.

III. It is important to keep in mind that we must soon die, in order that we may be stimulated to make the most of life for doing good. It is the consideration of the work to be done in this, our probation; of the incalculable good we may each accomplish; of the opportunity and power we have to make impressions upon each other lasting as the soul; of the immortal interests here pending; of the eternal destinies here making up; of the priceless souls here to be saved or lost—it is this that stamps eternity upon fleeting time, and gives an interest solemn as the grave to every hour of our earthly existence. Oh! if we felt it as we ought, how busy would these hearts, and hands, and powers of speech be in doing good! How penurious we should have been of the days of the year that is now closing, that we might have had them all to spend in usefulness and duty; in relieving distress and want; plucking brands from the burning; reclaiming the vicious and profligate; confirming the reformed; winning souls to Christ; preparing ourselves and preparing others for the awards of eternity.

If we truly realized that our time here were so short, the precious working-days of our probation so few, the winter of life so soon upon us, and this in all probability the only period of our existence in which we can be instrumental of saving souls, how would it quicken our zeal in the service of God; how fertile we should be in plans of usefulness; how enterprising and eager to bring them to a head; how instant and self-denying to improve all facilities for doing good; nay, how should we pant for the accomplishment of all we possibly could do in this dream-like life. How would our hands and tongue wait upon our heart in the cause of Christ and salvation, till heart should cease to beat, and tongue could talk no more. What, then, we might be we ought to be; and it is this realization of death as standing at the door, and just ready to summon us away from reaping a harvest in this broad field of christian activity, where he that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him; it is this keeping in mind that we must so soon die, and leave forever this broad land of labor for Christ and men's salvation, that would be a powerful incentive to work while the day lasts, and to do with our might whatsoever our hands find to do for the eternal well-being of our fellow-men, and the glory of God.

If the christian minister, for instance, had brought it feelingly home to his heart, as he began the year which is now departing, that this might be the last of his being a shepherd to his beloved flock, the last year in which he could stand as the ambassador of heaven, and be-

seech men for Christ's sake, to become reconciled to God, what faithfulness and pungency it would have given to his preaching; what force and earnestness to his appeals; what untiring energy and zeal in urging upon the unconverted the claims of the Gospel, and striving to bring them to repentance, that they might be represented as his jewels in the day of the Lord Jesus. Or, let the conscientious business-man seriously have entertained the thought, as he stood upon the threshold of the year whose sands are now ebbing, that this would be the last wherein he should meet and manage his family, his journeymen, and clerks, how carefully would he have dealt with, and walked before them, and how would he have endeavored to exert such an influence, and leave such an impression upon their minds, as would speak in favor of God and religion, when he should be in his grave.

Now, none of us know what lies in the lap of future years, any more than we did what lay in the lap of the year just expiring, at its commencement. But one thing we are certain of, that our time here is short, and it becometh us, as Christians, to do with our might whatsoever our hand findeth to do in the service of God. And it more than becometh those who are not Christians, it is of *infinite consequence for them now to repent.* Let not the good resolutions which every wise man will be forming at a time like this, perish in the intention merely. Make every good intention an act, and acts will become habits, and you will be established in well-doing and holy living. It is by virtue of the same great law of habit that men become both good and bad. Good men execute good intentions, and repeat good acts, till they have passed into habits, and the good man is wedded indissolubly to what is good, settled unalterably in ways of virtue, piety, and obedience, and the soul becomes free with the freedom of goodness, the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Vicious and selfish men, on the other hand, repeat vicious and worldly pleasures and indulgences, till they, too, have become habits with the grasp of an iron vice, and the soul is in bondage to sin, enslaved to corruption.

If there be one among our hearers or readers, who is conscious that the folds of evil habits are coiling around *him*, like the spiral of the anaconda about his victim, we earnestly say to that man, NOW OR NEVER IS THE TIME TO BREAK FROM THEIR DREADFUL EMBRACE. Rise like Samson, with the energy which the sight of opening perdition must give you, and in the strength with which Christ himself will endow you, if you will but trust in him, and break their bands asunder, and cast their cords from you. How dangerous to defer those momentous reformations, and that making ready for death, which conscience, and the loud voices of Providence, and the changing eras of

time are so solemnly preaching to your hearts. The longer the claims of religion, and the monitions and calls of God, by his word and his discipline, are neglected, the more do the indisposition and difficulty of yielding to them increase; and, all unknown perhaps, to himself, a man will be receding, step by step, degree after degree, from the warm zone of tenderness, hope, and impressibility, till his heart will enter the arctic circle of utter insensibility, and become fixed and relentless in eternal ice.

And, do any ask how this may not be with them, and how they shall avoid being bound forever in the icy fetters of stupidity, and fatally settling down in the frigid zone of carnal self-complacency, for religious indifference; then we can tell them, It will not be without such a resolute and decisive struggle of effort on their part, and such an earnest application to the Lord Jesus Christ for pardon and eternal life, as made the Saviour of sinners himself say, seeing its importance: "Agonize to enter in at the strait gate, for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able." May the Holy Spirit nail this charge to your memory and conscience, until you have truly entered in. Under his teaching may you adopt the prayer of the text, and be so taught to number your days as to apply your heart unto wisdom. Be instructed by the swiftness with which this year has fled, how soon another will hurry away, and how quickly the years of eternity will begin. Even now the death-ambush may be laying for your feet, or the arrow may be on the string that is to pierce and lay you low.

"Death steals on man with noiseless tread;
No plea, no prayer delivers him;
From midst of life's unfinished plan,
With sudden hand it severs him:
And ready or not ready, no delay,
Forth to his Judge's bar he must away."